

THE
MYSTERIES

OF
DOLPHO,

ROMANCE;

INTERSPERSED WITH SOME PIECES OF POETRY.

By ANN RATCLIFFE,

Author of the *Romance of the Forest*, *A Sicilian Romance*, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

Fate sits on these dark battlements, and frowns,
And, as the portals open to receive,
Her voice, in fullen echoes through the courts,
Tells of a nameless deed.

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THE
MYSTERIES
OF
UDOLPHO.

CHAP. XIX.

“Dark power! with shudd’ring, meek submitted thought
Be mine to reach the visions old
Which thy awakening bards have told,
And, lest they meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.”

COLLIN’S ODE TO FEAR.

EMILY was recalled from a kind of slumber, into which she had at length, sunk, by a quick knocking at her chamber door. She started up in terror, for Montoni and Count Morano instantly came to her mind; but, having listened in silence for some time, and recognising the voice of Annette, she rose and opened the door. “What brings you hither so early?” said Emily, trembling excessively. She was unable to support herself, and sat down on the bed.

“Dear ma’amfelle!” said Annette, “do not look so pale. I am quite frightened to see you. Here is a fine bustle below stairs, all the servants running to and fro, and none of them fast enough! Here is a bustle, indeed all of a sudden, and nobody knows for what!”

“Who is below besides them?” said Emily, “Annette, do not trifle with me!”

“Not for the world, ma’amfelle, I would not trifle for the world; but one cannot help making one’s remarks, and there is the Signor in such a bustle, as I never saw him before; and he has sent me to tell you, ma’am to get ready immediately.”

"Good God support me !" cried Emily, almost fainting, "Count Morano is below, then !"

"No, ma'amfelle, he is not below that I know of," replied Annette, "only his *Excellenza*, sent me to desire you would get ready directly to leave Venice, for that the gondolas would be at the steps of the canal in a few minutes; but I must hurry back to my lady, who is just at her wits end, and knows not which way to turn for haste."

"Explain, Annette, explain the meaning of all this before you go," said Emily, so overcome with surprise and timid hope, that she had scarcely breath to speak.

"Nay, ma'amfelle, that is more than I can do. I only know that the Signor is just come home in a very ill humour, that he has had us all called out of our beds, and tells us we are all to leave Venice immediately."

"Is Count Morano to go with the Signor ?" said Emily, "and whither are we going ?"

"I know neither, ma'am, for certain ; but I heard Ludovico say something about going, after we got to *Terraferma*, to the Signor's castle among some mountains, that he talked of."

"The Apennines !" said Emily, eagerly, "O ! then I have little to hope !"

"That is the very place ma'am. But cheer up, and do not take it so much to heart, and think what a little time you have got to get ready in, and how impatient the Signor is. Holy St. Mark ! I hear the oars on the canal ; and now they come nearer, and now they are dashing at the steps below ; it is the gondola, sure enough."

Annette hastened from the room ; and Emily prepared for this unexpected flight as fast as her trembling hands would permit, not perceiving, that any change in her situation could possibly be for the worse. She had scarcely thrown her books and clothes into her travelling trunk, when receiving a second summons, she went down to her aunt's dressing-room, where she found Montoni impatiently reproving his wife for delay. He went out, soon after, to give some further orders to his people, and Emily then inquired the occasion of this hasty journey ; but her aunt appeared to be as ignorant as herself, and to undertake the journey with more reluctance.

The family at length embarked, but neither Count Morano, or Cavigni, was of the party. Somewhat revived by observing this, Emily, when the gondolieri dashed their oars in the water, and put off from the steps of the portico, felt like a criminal,

who receives a short reprieve. Her heart beat yet lighter, when they emerged from the canal into the ocean, and lighter still, when they skimmed past the walls of St. Mark, without having stopped to take up Count Morano.

The dawn now began to tint the horizon, and to break upon the shores of the Adriatic. Emily did not venture to ask any questions of Montoni, who sat, for sometime, in gloomy silence, and then rolled himself up in his cloak, as if to sleep, while Madame Montoni did the same; but Emily, who could not sleep, undrew one of the little curtains of the gondola, and looked out upon the sea. The rising dawn now enlightened the mountain-tops of Friuli, but their lower sides, and the distant waves, that rolled at their feet, were still in deep shadow. Emily, sunk in tranquil melancholy, watched the strengthening light spreading upon the ocean, shewing successively, Venice and her islets, and the shores of Italy, along which boats, with their pointed latin sails, began to move.

The gondolieri were frequently hailed, at this early hour, by the market-people, as they glided by towards Venice, and the *Lagune* soon displayed a gay scene of innumerable little barks, passing from *Terraferma* with provisions. Emily gave a last look to that splendid city, but her mind was then occupied by considering the probable events that awaited her, in the scenes, to which she was removing, and with conjectures, concerning the motive of this sudden journey. It appeared, upon calmer consideration, that Montoni was removing her to his secluded castle, because he could there, with more probability of success, attempt to terrify her into obedience; or, that, should its gloomy and sequestered scenes fail of this effect, her forced marriage with the Count could there be solemnized with the secrecy, which was necessary to the honour of Montoni. The little spirit, which this reprieve had recalled, now began to fail, and, when Emily reached the shore, her mind had sunk into all its former depression.

Montoni did not embark on the Brenta, but pursued his way in carriages across the country, towards the Apennine; during which journey, his manner to Emily was so particularly severe, that this alone would have confirmed her late conjecture, had any such confirmation been necessary. Her senses were now dead to the beautiful country, through which she travelled.— Sometimes she was compelled to smile at the *naivete* of Annette, in her remarks on what she saw, and sometimes to sigh, as a scene of peculiar beauty recalled Valancourt to her thoughts,

who was indeed seldom absent from them, and of whom she could never hope to hear in the solitude, to which she was hastening.

At length, the travellers began to ascend among the Apennines. The immense pine forests, which, at that period, overhung these mountains, and between which the road wound, excluded all view but of the cliffs aspiring above, except, that, now and then, an opening through the dark woods allowed the eye a momentary glimpse of the country below. The gloom of these shades, their solitary silence, except when the breeze swept over their summits, the tremendous precipices of the mountains, that came partially to the eye, each assisted to raise the solemnity of Emily's feelings into awe; she saw only images of gloomy grandeur, or of dreadful sublimity, around her; other images, equally gloomy and equally terrible, gleamed on her imagination. She was going she scarcely knew whither, under the dominion of a person, from whose arbitrary disposition she had already suffered so much, to marry, perhaps, a man who possessed neither her affection or esteem; or to endure, beyond the hope of succour, whatever punishment revenge, and that Italian revenge, might dictate. The more she considered what might be the motive of the journey, the more she became convinced, that it was for the purpose of concluding her nuptials with Count Morano, with that secrecy which her resolute resistance had made necessary to the honour, if not to the safety of Montoni. From the deep solitudes, into which she was emerging, and from the gloomy castle, of which she had heard some mysterious hints, her sick heart recoiled in despair, and she experienced, that, though her mind was already occupied by peculiar distress, it was still alive to the influence of new and local circumstance; why else did she shudder at the idea of this desolate castle?

As the travellers still ascended among the pine forests, steep rose over steep, the mountains seemed to multiply, as they went, and what was the summit of one eminence proved to be only the base of another. At length, they reached a little plain, where the drivers stopped to rest the mules, whence a scene of such extent and magnificence opened below, as drew even from Madame Montoni a note of admiration. Emily lost, for a moment, her sorrows, in the immensity of nature. Beyond the amphitheatre of mountains that stretched below, whose tops appeared as numerous almost, as the waves of the sea, and whose feet were concealed by the forests—extended the *Campagna* of Italy, where cities and rivers, and woods and all the glow of

cultivation were mingled in gay confusion. The Adriatic bounded the horizon, into which the Po and the Brenta, after winding through the whole extent of the landscape, poured their fruitful waves. Emily gazed long on the splendours of the world she was quitting, of which the whole magnificence seemed thus given to her sight only to increase her regret on leaving it; for her, Valancourt alone was in that world; to him alone her heart turned, and for him alone fell her bitter tears.

From this sublime scene the travellers continued to ascend among the pines, till they entered a narrow pass of the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and, in its stead, exhibited only tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared, except here and there the trunk and scathed branches of an oak, that hung nearly headlong from the rock, into which its strong roots had fastened. This pass, which led into the heart of the Apennine, at length opened to day, and a scene of mountains stretched in long perspective, as wild as any the travellers had yet passed. Still vast pine-forests hung upon their base, and crowned their ridgy precipice, that rose perpendicularly from the vale, while, above, the rolling mists caught the sunbeams, and touched their cliffs with all the magical colouring of light and shade. The scene seemed perpetually changing, and its features to assume new forms, as the winding road brought them to the eye in different attitudes; while the shifting vapours, now partially concealing their minuter beauties, and now illuminating them with splendid tints, assisted the illusions of the sight.

Though the deep vallies between these mountains were, for the most part, clothed with pines, sometimes an abrupt opening presented a perspective of only barren rocks, with a cataract flashing from their summit among broken cliffs, till its waters, reaching the bottom, foamed along with unceasing fury; and sometimes pastoral scenes exhibited their "green delights" in the narrow vales, smiling amid surrounding horror. There herds and flocks of goats and sheep, browsing under the shade of hanging woods, and the shepherd's little cabin, reared on the margin of a clear stream, presented a sweet picture of repose.

Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime, than had those of the Alps, which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt those emotions of indescribable awe, which she had so continually experienced, in her passage over the Alps.

Towards the close of day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steep appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, that exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits, rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest, that hung upon the opposite steep, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle, that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade, which involved the valley below.

"There," said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, "is Udolpho."

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark gray stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen, rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and, soon after, reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions, that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the gloom, that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ram-

parts, and to know, that it was vast, ancient and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam, that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war. Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts; after which an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal, to admit his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court, into which she passed, served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify.

Another gate delivered them into the second court, grass-grown, and more wild than the first, where, as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation—its lofty walls, overtopped with briony, moss and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above, long suffering and murder came to her thoughts. One of those instantaneous and unaccountable convictions which sometimes conquer even strong minds, impressed her with its horror. The sentiment was not diminished, when she entered an extensive gothic hall, obscured by the gloom of evening, which a light, glimmering at a distance through a long perspective of arches, only rendered more striking. As a servant brought the lamp nearer, partial gleams fell upon the pillars and the pointed arches, forming a strong contrast with their shadows, that stretched along the pavement and the walls. The sudden journey of Montoni had prevented his people from making any other preparations for his reception, than could be had in the short interval, since the arrival of the servant, who had been sent forward from Venice; and this, in some measure, may account for the air of extreme desolation, that every where appeared.

The servant, who came to light Montoni, bowed in silence, and the muscles of his countenance relaxed with no symptom of joy. Montoni noticed the salutation by a slight motion of his hand, and passed on, while his lady, following, and looking round with a degree of surprise and discontent, which she seemed fearful of expressing, and Emily, surveying the extent and grandeur of the hall in timid wonder, approached a marble staircase. The arches here opened to a lofty vault, from the centre of which hung a tripod lamp, which a servant was hastily lighting; and the rich fretwork of the roof, a corridor, leading into several upper apartments, and a painted window, stretching nearly from the pavement to the ceiling of the hall, became gradually visible.

Having crossed the foot of the staircase, and passed through an anti-room, they entered a spacious apartment, whose walls, wainscoted with black larch wood, the growth of the neighbouring mountains, were scarcely distinguishable from darkness itself. "Bring more light," said Montoni, as he entered. The servant setting down his lamp, was withdrawing to obey him, when Madame Montoni observing, that the evening air of this mountainous region was cold, and that she should like a fire, Montoni ordered that wood might be brought.

While he paced the room with thoughtful steps, and Madame Montoni sat silently on a couch, at the upper end of it, waiting till the servant returned, Emily was observing the singular solemnity and desolation of the apartment, viewed, as it now was, by the glimmer of the single lamp, placed near a large Venetian mirror, that duskily reflected the scene, with the tall figure of Montoni passing slowly along, his arms folded, and his countenance shaded by the plume that waved in his hat.

From the contemplation of this scene, Emily's mind proceeded to the apprehension of what she might suffer in it, till the remembrance of Valancourt, far, far distant! came to her heart, and softened it into sorrow. A heavy sigh escaped her; but, trying to conceal her tears, she walked away to one of the high windows, that opened upon the ramparts, below which, spread the woods she had passed in her approach to the castle. But the nightshade sat deeply on the mountains beyond, and their indented outline alone could be faintly traced on the horizon, where a red streak yet glimmered in the west. The valley between was sunk in darkness.

The scene within, upon which Emily turned on the opening of the door, was scarcely less gloomy. The old servant who had received them at the gates, now entered, bending under a load of

pine branches, while two of Montoni's Venetian servants followed with lights.

"Your *Excellenza* is welcome to the castle," said the old man, as he raised himself from the hearth, where he had laid the wood : "it has been a lonely place a long while ; but you will excuse it, Signor, knowing we had but short notice. It is near two years, come next feast of St. Mark, since your *Excellenza* was within these walls."

"You have a good memory, old Carlo," said Montoni : "it is thereabout ; and how hast thou contrived to live so long."

"A-well-a-day, sir, with much ado ; the cold winds, that blow through the castle in winter, are almost too much for me ; and I thought sometimes of asking your *Excellenza* to let me leave the mountains, and go down into the lowlands. But I don't know how it is—I am loath to quit these old walls I have lived in so long."

"Well, how have you gone on in the castle, since I left it ?" said Montoni.

"Why much as usual, Signor, only it wants a good deal of repairing. There is the north tower, some of the battlements have tumbled down, and had liked one day to have knocked my poor wife (God rest her soul !) on the head. Your *Excellenza* must know"——

"Well, but the repairs," interrupted Montoni.

"Aye, the repairs," said Carlo : "a part of the roof of the great hall has fallen in, and all the winds from the mountains rushed through it last winter, and whistled through the whole castle so, that there was no keeping one's self warm, be were one would. There, my wife and I used to sit shivering over a great fire in one corner of the little hall, ready to die with cold, and"—

"But there are no more repairs wanted," said Montoni, impatiently.

"O Lord ! your *Excellenza*, yes—the wall of the rampart has tumbled down in three places ; then, the stairs that lead to the west gallery, have been a long time so bad, that it is dangerous to go up them ; and the passage leading to the great oak chamber, that overhangs the north rampart—one night last winter I ventured to go there by myself, and your *Excellenza*"——

"Well, well, enough of this," said Montoni, with quickness : "I will talk more with thee to-morrow."

The fire was now lighted ; Carlo swept the hearth, placed chairs, wiped the dust from a large marble table that stood near it, and then left the room.

Montoni and his family drew round the fire. Madame Montoni made several attempts at conversation, but his sullen answers repulsed her, while Emily sat endeavouring to acquire courage enough to speak to him. At length, in a tremulous voice, she said, "May I ask, sir, the motive of this sudden journey?" After a long pause, she recovered sufficient courage to repeat the question.

"It does not suit me to answer inquiries," said Montoni, "nor does it become you to make them; time may unfold them all: but I desire I may be no further harassed, and I recommend it to you to retire to your chamber, and to endeavour to adopt a more rational conduct, than that of yielding to fancies, and to a sensibility, which, to call it by the gentlest name, is only a weakness."

Emily rose to withdraw. "Good night madam," said she to her aunt, with an assumed composure, that could not disguise her emotion.

"Good night, my dear," said Madame Montoni, in a tone of kindness, which her niece had never before heard from her; and the unexpected endearment brought tears to Emily's eyes. She curtsied to Montoni, and was retiring; "But you do not know the way to your chamber," said her aunt. Montoni called the servant, who waited in the anti-room, and bade him send Madame Montoni's woman, with whom, in a few minutes, Emily withdrew.

"Do you know which is my room?" said she to Annette, as they crossed the hall.

"Yes, I believe I do, ma'amfelle; but this is such a strange rambling place! I have been lost in it already: they call it the double chamber over the south rampart, and I went up this great staircase to it. My lady's room is at the other end of the castle."

Emily ascended the marble staircase, and came to the corridor, as they passed through which, Annette resumed her chat. "What a wild lonely place this is, ma'am! I shall be quite frightened to live in it. How often, and often I have wished myself in France again! I little thought, when I came with my lady to see the world, that I should ever be shut up in such a place as this, or I would never have left my own country! This way, ma'amfelle, down this turning. I can almost believe in giants again, and such like, for this is just like one of their castles; and, some night or other; I suppose I shall see fairies too, hopping about in that great old hall, that looks more like a church, with its huge pillars, than any thing else."

"Yes," said Emily, smiling, and glad to escape from more serious thought, "if we come to the corridor, about midnight, and look down into the hall, we shall certainly see it illuminated with a thousand lamps, and the fairies tripping in gay circles to the sound of delicious music; for it is in such places as this, you know, that they come to hold their revels. But I am afraid, Annette, you will not be able to pay the necessary penance for such a sight: and, if once they hear your voice, the whole scene will vanish in an instant."

"O! if you will bear me company, ma'amselle, I will come to the corridor, this very night, and I promise you I will hold my tongue; it shall not be my fault if the show vanishes.—But do you think they will come?"

"I cannot promise that with certainty, but I will venture to say, it will not be your fault if the enchantment should vanish."

"Well, ma'amselle, that is saying more than I expected of you: but I am not so much afraid of fairies, as of ghosts, and they say there are a plentiful many of them about the castle: now I should be frightened to death, if I should chance to see any of them. But hush! ma'amselle, walk softly; I have thought, several times, something passed by me."

"Ridiculous!" said Emily, "you must not indulge such fancies."

"O ma'am! they are not fancies, for aught I know; Benedetto says these dismal galleries and halls are fit for nothing but ghosts to live in; and I verily believe, if I *live* long in them I shall turn to one myself!"

"I hope," said Emily, "you will not suffer Signor Montoni to hear of these weak fears; they would highly displease him."

"What, you know then, ma'amselle, all about it!" rejoined Annette. "No, no, I do know better than to do so; though, if the Signor can sleep sound, nobody else in the castle has any right to lie awake, I am sure." Emily did not appear to notice this remark.

"Down this passage, ma'amselle; this leads to a back staircase. O! if I see any thing, I shall be frightened out of my wits!"

"That will scarcely be possible," said Emily, smiling, as she followed the winding of the passage, which opened into another gallery: and then Annette, perceiving that she had missed her way, while she had been so eloquently haranguing on ghosts and fairies, wandered about through other passages and galleries, till, at length, frightened by their intricacies and desolation, she call-

ed aloud for assistance : but they were beyond the hearing of the servants, who were on the other side of the castle, and Emily now opened the door of a chamber on the left.

" O ! do not go in there, ma'amfelle," said Annette, " you will only lose yourself further."

" Bring the light forward," said Emily, " we may possibly find our way through these rooms."

Annette stood at the door, in an attitude of hesitation, with the light held up to shew the chamber, but the feeble rays spread through not half of it. " Why do you hesitate ?" said Emily, " let me see whither this room leads."

Annette advanced reluctantly. It opened into a suite of spacious and ancient apartments, some of which were hung with tapestry, and others wainscoted with cedar and black larch wood. What furniture there was, seemed to be almost as old as the rooms, and retained an appearance of grandeur, though covered with dust, and dropping to pieces with the damps, and with age.

" How cold these rooms are, ma'amfelle !" said Annette : " nobody has lived in them for many, many years, they say. Do let us go."

" They may open upon the great staircase, perhaps," said Emily, passing on till she came to a chamber, hung with pictures, and took the light to examine that of a soldier on horseback in a field of battle.—He was darting his spear upon a man, who lay under the feet of the horse, and who held up one hand in a supplicating attitude. The soldier whose beaver was up, regarded him with a look of vengeance, and the countenance, with that expression, struck Emily as resembling Montoni. She shuddered, and turned from it. Passing the light hastily over several other pictures, she came to one concealed by a veil of black silk. The singularity of the circumstance struck her, and she stopped before it, wishing to remove the veil, and examine what could thus carefully be concealed, but somewhat wanting courage. " Holy Virgin ! what can this mean ?" exclaimed Annette. " This is surely the picture they told me of at Venice."

" What picture ?" said Emily. " Why a picture—a picture," replied Annette, hesitatingly—" but I never could make out exactly what it was about, either."

" Remove the veil, Annette."

" What ! I, ma'amfelle !—I ! not for the world !" Emily, turning round, saw Annette's countenance grow pale. " And pray, what have you heard of this picture, to terrify you so, my

good girl?" said she. "Nothing ma'amfelle: I have heard nothing, only let us find our way out."

"Certainly: but I wish first to examine the picture; take the light, Annette, while I lift the veil." Annette took the light, and immediately walked away with it, disregarding Emily's calls to stay, who, not choosing to be left alone in the dark chamber, at length followed her. "What is the reason of this, Annette?" said Emily, when she overtook her, "what have you heard concerning that picture, which makes you so unwilling to stay when I bid you?"

"I don't know what is the reason, ma'amfelle," replied Annette, "nor any thing about the picture, only I have heard there is something very dreadful belonging to it—and that it has been covered up in black *ever since*—and that nobody has looked at it for a great many years—and it somehow has to do with the owner of this castle before Signor Montoni came to the possession of it—and"——

"Well, Annette," said Emily, smiling, "I perceive it is as you say—that you know nothing about the picture."

"No, nothing, indeed, ma'amfelle, for they made me promise never to tell: but"——

"Well," rejoined Emily, who observed that she was struggling between her inclination to reveal a secret, and her apprehension for the consequence, "I will inquire no further"—

"No, pray, ma'am, do not."

"Left you should tell all," interrupted Emily.

Annette blush'd, and Emily smiled, and they passed on to the extremity of this suite of apartments, and found themselves after some further perplexity, once more at the top of the marble staircase, where Annette left Emily, while she went to call one of the servants of the castle to shew them to the chamber, for which they had been seeking.

While she was absent, Emily's thoughts returned to the picture; an unwillingness to tamper with the integrity of a servant had checked her inquiries on this subject, as well as concerning some alarming hints, which Annette had dropped respecting Montoni; though her curiosity was entirely awakened, and she had perceived, that her questions might easily be answered. She was now, however, inclined to go back to the apartment and examine the picture; but the loneliness of the hour and of the place, with the melancholy silence that reigned around her, conspired with a certain degree of awe, excited by the mystery attending this picture, to prevent her. She determined, however,

when daylight should have re-animated her spirits; to go thither and remove the veil. As she leaned from the corridor, over the staircase, and her eyes wandered round, she again observed, with wonder, the vast strength of the walls, now somewhat decayed, and the pillars of solid marble, that rose from the hall, and supported the roof.

A servant now appeared with Annette, and conducted Emily to her chamber, which was in a remote part of the castle, and at the end of the very corridor, from whence the suite of apartments opened, through which they had been wandering. The lonely aspect of her room made Emily unwilling that Annette should leave her immediately, and the dampness of it chilled her with more than fear. She begged Caterina, the servant of the castle, to bring some wood and light a fire.

"Aye, lady, it's many a year since a fire was lighted here," said Caterina.

"You need not tell us that, good woman," said Annette; "every room in the castle feels like a well. I wonder how you contrive to live here; for my part, I wish myself at Venice again." Emily waved her hand for Caterina to fetch the wood.

"I wonder, ma'am, why they call this the double chamber?" said Annette, while Emily surveyed it in silence, and saw that it was lofty and spacious, like the others she had seen, and, like many of them, too, had its walls lined with dark larch-wood. The bed and other furniture was very ancient, and had an air of gloomy grandeur, like all that she had seen in the castle. One of the high casements, which she opened, overlooked a rampart, but the view beyond was hid in darkness.

In the presence of Annette, Emily tried to support her spirits, and to restrain the tears, which, every now and then, came to her eyes. She wished much to inquire when Count Morano was expected at the castle, but an unwillingness to ask unnecessary questions, and to mention family concerns to a servant, withheld her. Meanwhile, Annette's thoughts were engaged upon another subject: she dearly loved the marvellous, and had heard of a circumstance connected with the castle, that highly gratified this taste. Having been enjoined not to mention it, her inclination to tell it was so strong, that she was every instant on the point of speaking what she had heard. Such a strange circumstance, too, and to be obliged to conceal it, was a severe punishment; but she knew, that Montoni might impose one much severer, and she feared to incur it by offending him.

Caterina now brought the wood, and its bright blaze dispel-

ed, for a while, the gloom of the chamber. She told Annette that her lady had inquired for her, and Emily was once again left to her own sad reflections. Her heart was not yet hardened against the stern manners of Montoni, and she was nearly as much shocked now, as she had been when she first witnessed them. The tenderness and affection, to which she had been accustomed, till she lost her parents, had made her particularly sensible to any degree of unkindness, and such a reverse as this no apprehension had prepared her to support.

To call off her attention from subjects, that pressed heavily upon her spirits, she rose and again examined her room and its furniture. As she walked round it, she passed a door, that was not quite shut, and, perceiving, that it was not the one, through which she entered, she brought the light forward to discover whither it led. She opened it, and, going forward, had nearly fallen down a steep, narrow staircase, that wound from it, between two stone walls. She wished to know to what it led, and was the more anxious, since it communicated so immediately with her apartment; but, in the present state of her spirits, she wanted courage to venture into the darkness alone. Closing the door, therefore, she endeavoured to fasten it, but, upon further examination, perceived, that it had no bolts on the chamber side, though it had two on the other. By placing a heavy chair against it, she in some measure remedied the defect; yet she was still alarmed at the thought of sleeping in this remote room alone, with a door opening she knew not whither, and which could not be perfectly fastened on the inside. Sometimes she wished to entreat of Madame Montoni, that Annette might have leave to remain with her all night, but was deterred by an apprehension of betraying what would be thought childish fears, and by an unwillingness to increase the apt terrors of Annette.

Her gloomy reflections were, soon after interrupted by a footstep in the corridor, and she was glad to see Annette enter with some supper, sent by Madame Montoni. Having a table near the fire, she made the good girl sit down and sup with her; and, when their little repast was over, Annette, encouraged by her kindness and stirring the wood into a blaze, drew her chair up on the hearth, nearer to Emily, and said,—“Did you ever hear ma’amfelle, of the strange accident, that made the Signor lord of this castle?”

“What wonderful story have you now to tell?” said Emily concealing the curiosity, occasioned by the mysterious hints she had formerly heard on that subject.

"I have heard all about it, ma'amfelle," said Annette, looking round the chamber and drawing closer to Emily; "Benedetto told it me as we travelled together: says he, 'Annette, you don't know about this castle here, that we are going to? No,' says I, Mr. Benedetto, pray what do you know? But, ma'amfelle, you can keep a secret, or I would not tell it you for the world; for I promised never to tell, and they say, that the Signor does not like to have it talked of."

"If you promised to keep this secret," said Emily, "you do right not to mention it."

Annette paused a moment, and then said, "O, but to you, ma'amfelle, to you I may tell it safely, I know."

Emily smiled, "I certainly shall keep it as faithfully as yourself, Annette."

Annette replied very gravely, that would do, and proceeded—"This castle, you must know, ma'amfelle, is very old, and very strong, and has stood out many sieges, as they say. Now it was not Signor Montoni's always, nor his father's, no; but by some, law or other, it was to come to the Signor, if the lady died unmarried."

"What lady?" said Emily.

"I am not come to that yet," replied Annette, "it is the lady I am going to tell you about, ma'amfelle: but, as I was saying, this lady lived in the castle, and had every thing very grand about her, as you may suppose ma'amfelle. The Signor used often to come to see her, and was in love with her, and offered to marry her; for, though he was somehow related, that did not signify. But she was in love with somebody else, and would not have him, which made him very angry, as they say, and you know ma'amfelle, what an ill looking gentleman he is, when he is angry. Perhaps she saw him in a passion, and therefore would not have him. But, as I was saying, she was very melancholy and unhappy, and all that, for a long while, and—Holy Virgin! what noise is that? did not you hear a sound, ma'amfelle?"

"It is only the wind," said Emily, "but do come to the end of your story."

"As I was saying—O, where was I?—as I was saying—she was very melancholy and unhappy a long while, and used to walk about upon the terrace, there, under the windows, by herself, and cry so! it would have done your heart good to hear her. That is—I don't mean good, but it would have made you cry too, as they tell me."

"Well, but, Annette, do tell me the substance of your tale."

"All in good time, ma'am ; all this I heard before at Venice, but what is to come I never heard till to day. This happened a great many years ago, when Signor Montoni was quite a young man. The lady they called her Signora Laurentini, was very handsome, but she used to be in great passions, too, sometimes, as well as the Signor. Finding he could not make her listen to him—what does he do but leave the castle, and never comes near it for a long time ! but it was all one to her ; she was just as unhappy whether he was here or not, till one evening, Holy St. Peter ! ma'amselle," cried Annette, "look at that lamp, see how blue it burns !" She looked fearfully round the chamber. "Ridiculous girl !" said Emily, "why will you indulge those fancies ? Pray let me hear the end of your story, I am weary."

Annette still kept her eyes on the lamp, and proceeded in a lower voice. "It was one evening, they say, at the latter end of the year, it might be about the middle of September, I suppose, or the beginning of October ; nay, for that matter, it might be November, for that, too, is the latter end of the year, but that I cannot say for certain, because they did not tell me for certain themselves. However, it was at the latter end of the year, this grand lady walked out of the castle into the woods below, as she had often done before, all alone only her maid was with her. The wind blew cold, and strewed the leaves about, and whistled dismally among those great old chestnut trees, that we passed, ma'amselle, as we came to the castle—for Benedetto shewed me the trees, as he was talking—the wind blew cold, and her woman would have persuaded her to return : but all would not do, for she was fond of walking in the woods, at evening time, and if the leaves were falling about her, so much the better.

"Well, they saw her go down among the woods, but night came, and she did not return ; ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock came, and no lady ! Well, the servants thought to be sure, some accident had befallen her, and they went out to seek her. They searched all night long, but could not find her, or any trace of her ; and, from that day to this, ma'amselle she has never been heard of."

"Is this true, Annette ?" said Emily in much surprise.

"True, ma'am !" said Annette, with a look of horror, "yes, it is true, indeed. But they do say," she added, lowering her voice, "they do say, that the Signora has been seen, several times since, walking in the woods and about the castle in the night : several of the old servants, who remained here sometime

after, declare they saw her ; and, since then, she has been seen by some of the vassals, who have happened to be in the castle, at night. Carlo, the old steward, could tell such things, they say, if he would."

"How contradictory is this, Annette !" said Emily, "you say nothing has been since known of her, and yet she has been seen !"

"But all this was told me for a great secret," rejoined Annette, without noticing the remark, "and I am sure, ma'am, you would not hurt either me or Benedetto, so much as to go and tell it again." Emily remained silent, and Annette repeated her last sentence.

"You have nothing to fear from my indiscretion," replied Emily, "and let me advise you, my good Annette, be discreet yourself, and never mention what you have just told me to any other person. Signor Montoni, as you say, may be angry if he hears of it. But what inquiries were made concerning the lady."

"O ! a great deal, indeed, ma'amfelle, for the Signor laid claim to the castle directly, as being the next heir, and they said, that is, the judges or the senators, or somebody of that sort, said, he could not take possession of it till so many years were gone by, and then, if, after all, the lady could not be found, why she would be as good as dead, and the castle would be his own ; and so it is his own. But the story went round, and many strange reports were spread so very strange, ma'amfelle, that I shall not tell them."

"That is stranger still, Annette," said Emily, smiling, and rousing herself from her reverie. "But, when Signora Laurentini was afterwards seen in the castle, did nobody speak to her ?"

"Speak—speak to her !" cried Annette, with a look of terror ; "no, to be sure."

"And why not ?" rejoined Emily, willing to hear further.

"Holy Mother ! speak to a spirit !"

"But what reason had they to conclude it was a spirit unless they had approached, and, spoken to it ?"

"O ma'amfelle, I cannot tell. How can you ask such shocking questions ? But nobody ever saw it come in, or go out of the castle ; and it was in one place now, and then the next minute in quite another part of the castle ; and then it never spoke, and, if it was alive, what should it do in the castle if it never spoke ? Several parts of the castle have never been gone into since, they say, for that very reason."

"What, because it never spoke ?" said Emily, trying to laugh away the fears, that began to steal upon her.—"No,

ma'amfelle, no ; " replied Annette, rather angrily, " but because something has been seen there. They say, too, there is an old chapel adjoining the west side of the castle, where, any time at midnight, you may hear such groans !—it makes one shudder to think of them !—and strange sights have been seen there——"

" Pr'ythee, Annette, no more of these silly tales," said Emily.

" Silly tales, ma'amfelle ! O, but I will tell you one story about this, if you please, that Caterina told me. It was one cold winter's night that Caterina (she often came to the castle then, she says, to keep old Carlo and his wife company, and so he recommended her afterwards to the Signor, and she lived here ever since) Caterina was sitting with them in the little hall, says Carlo, I wish we had some of those figs to roast, that lie in the store closet, but it is along way off, and I am loath to fetch them ; do, Caterina," says he, " for you are young and nimble, do bring us some, the fire is in a nice trim for roasting them ; they lie," says he, " in such a corner of the storeroom, at the end of the north-gallery ; here, take the lamp," says he, " and mind, as you go up the great staircase, that the wind, through the roof, does not blow it out." So, with that, Caterina took the lamp—Hush ! ma'amfelle, I surely heard a noise !"

Emily, whom Annette had now infected with her own terrors, listened attentively ; but every thing was still, and Annette proceeded :

" Caterina went to the north gallery, that is the wide gallery we passed, ma'am, before we came to the corridor, here. As, she went with the lamp in her hand thinking of nothing at all——There, again !" cried Annette, suddenly—" I heard it again !—it was not fancy, ma'amfelle !"

" Hush !" said Emily, trembling. They listened, and continuing to sit quite still, Emily heard a low knocking against the wall. It came repeatedly. Annette then screamed loudly, and the chamber door slowly opened. It was Caterina, come to tell Annette, that her lady wanted her. Emily, though she now perceived who it was, could not immediately overcome her terror ; while Annette, half laughing, half crying, scolded Caterina heartily for thus alarming them ; and was also terrified lest what she had told had been overheard. Emily, whose mind was deeply impressed by the chief circumstance of Annette's relation, was unwilling to be left alone, in the present state of her spirits ; but, to avoid offending Madame Montoni, and betraying her own weakness, she struggled to overcome the illusions of fear, and dismissed Annette for the night.

When she was alone, her thoughts recurred to the strange history of Signora Laurentini and then to her own strange situation, in the wild and solitary mountains of a foreign country, in the castle, and the power of a man, to whom, only a few preceding months, she was an entire stranger; who had already exercised an usurped authority over her, and whose character she now regarded with a degree of terror, apparently justified by the fears of others. She knew, that he had invention equal to the conception and talents to the execution of any project, and she greatly feared he had a heart too void of feeling to oppose the perpetration of whatever his interest might suggest. She had long observed the unhappiness of Madame Montoni, and had often been witness to the stern and contemptuous behaviour she received from her husband. To these circumstances, which conspired to give her just cause for alarm, were now added those thousand nameless terrors, which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance.

Emily remembered all that Valancourt had told her, on the eve of her departure from Languedoc, respecting Montoni, and all that he had said to dissuade her from venturing on the journey. His fears had often since appeared to her prophetic—now they seemed confirmed. Her heart, as it gave her back the image of Valancourt, mourned in vain regret, but reason soon came with a consolation, which, though feeble at first, acquired vigour from reflection. She considered, that, whatever might be her sufferings, she had withheld from involving him in misfortune, and that, whatever her future sorrows could be, she was, at least, free from self reproach.

Her melancholy was assisted by the hollow sighings of the wind along the corridor and round the castle. The cheerful blaze of the wood had long been extinguished, and she sat with her eyes fixed on the dying embers, till a loud gust, that swept through the corridor, and shook the doors and casements, alarmed her, for its violence had moved the chair she had placed as a fastening, and the door, leading to the private staircase, stood half open. Her curiosity and her fears were again awakened. She took the lamp to the top of the steps, and stood hesitating whether to go down; but again the profound stillness and the gloom of the place awed her, and, determining to inquire further, when daylight might assist the search, she closed the door, and placed against it a stronger guard.

She now retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the table ; but its gloomy light, instead of dispelling her fear, assisted it ; for, by its uncertain rays, she almost fancied she saw shapes flit past her curtains and glide into the remote obscurity of her chamber. The castle clock struck one before she closed her eyes to sleep.

CHAP. XX.

" I think it is the weakness of mine eyes,
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me !"

JULIUS CÆSAR.

DAYLIGHT dispelled from Emily's mind the glooms of superstition, but not those of apprehension. The Count Morano was the first image, that occurred to her waking thoughts, and then came a train of anticipated evils, which she could neither conquer, or avoid. She rose, and, to relieve her mind from the busy ideas, that tormented it, compelled herself to notice external objects. From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by alpine steepes, whose tops, peeping over each other, faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below, were dark with woods, that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow vallies. The rich pomp of these woods was particularly delightful to Emily ; and she viewed with astonishment the fortifications of the castle spreading along a vast extent of rock, and now partly in decay, the grandeur of the ramparts below, and the towers and battlements and various features of the fabric above. From these her sight wandered over the cliffs and woods into the valley, along which foamed a broad and rapid stream, seen falling among the crags of an opposite mountain, now flashing in the sunbeams, and now shadowed by overarching pines, till it was entirely concealed by their thick foliage. Again it burst from beneath this darkness in one broad sheet of foam, and fell thundering into the vale. Nearer, towards the west, opened the mountain vista, which Emily had viewed with such sublime emotion, on her approach to the castle : a thin dusky vapour, that rose from the valley, overspread its features with a sweet obscurity. As this ascended and caught the sunbeams, it kindled into a crimson tint, and touched with

exquisite beauty the woods and cliffs, over which it passed to the summit of the mountains ; then, as the veil drew up, it was delightful, to watch the gleaming objects, that progressively disclosed themselves in the valley—the green turf—dark woods—little rocky recesses—a few peasants' huts—the foaming stream—a herd of cattle, and various images of pastoral beauty. Then, the pine forests brightened, and then the broad breast of the mountains, till, at length, the mist settled round their summit, touching them with a ruddy glow. The features of the vista now appeared distinctly, and the broad deep shadows, that fell from the lower cliffs, gave strong effect to the streaming splendour above ; while the mountains, gradually sinking in the perspective, appeared to shelve into the Adriatic sea, for such Emily imagined to be the gleam of blueish light, that terminated the view.*

Thus she endeavoured to amuse her fancy, and was not unsuccessful. The breezy freshness of the morning, too, revived her. She raised her thoughts in prayer, which she felt always most disposed to do, when viewing the sublimity of nature, and her mind recovered its strength.

When she turned from the casement, her eyes glanced upon the door she had so carefully guarded, on the preceding night, and she now determined to examine whither it led ; but, on advancing to remove the chairs, she perceived, that they were already moved a little way. Her surprise cannot easily be imagined, when, in the next minute, she perceived that the door was fastened.—She felt, as if she had seen an apparition. The door of the corridor was locked as she had left it, but this door, which could be secured only on the outside, must have been bolted, during the night. She became seriously uneasy at the thought of sleeping again in a chamber, thus liable to intrusion, so remote, too, as it was from the family, and she determined to mention the circumstance to Madame Montoni, and to request a change.

After some perplexity she found her way into the great hall, and to the room, which she had left, on the preceding night, where breakfast was spread, and her aunt was alone, for Montoni had been walking over the environs of the castle, examining the condition of its fortifications, and talking for sometime with Carlo. Emily observed, that her aunt had been weeping, and her heart softened towards her, with an affection, that shewed itself in her manner, rather than in words, while she carefully avoided the appearance of having noticed, that she was unhappy. She seized the opportunity of Montoni's absence to mention the circumstance of the door, to request that she might be allowed

another apartment, and to inquire again, concerning the occasion of their sudden journey. On the first subject her aunt referred her to Montoni, positively refusing to interfere in the affair; on the last, she professed utter ignorance.

Emily, then, with a wish of making her aunt more reconciled to her situation, praised the grandeur of the castle and the surrounding scenery, and endeavoured to soften every unpleasant circumstance attending it. But, though misfortune had somewhat conquered the asperities of Madame Montoni's temper, and, by increasing her cares for herself, had taught her to feel in some degree for others, the capricious love of rule, which nature had planted and habit had nourished in her heart, was not subdued. She could not now deny herself the gratification of tyrannizing over the innocent and helpless Emily, by attempting to ridicule the taste she could not feel.

Her satirical discourse was, however, interrupted by the entrance of Montoni, and her countenance immediately assumed a mingled expression of fear and resentment, while he seated himself at the breakfast table, as if unconscious of there being any person but himself in the room.

"Emily, as she observed him in silence, saw that his countenance was darker and sterner than usual. "O could I know," said she to herself, "what passes in that mind; could I know the thoughts, that are known there, I should no longer be condemned to this torturing suspense!" Their breakfast passed in silence, till Emily ventured to request, that another apartment might be allotted to her, and related the circumstance which made her wish it.

"I have no time to attend these idle whims," said Montoni, "that chamber was prepared for you, and you must rest contented with it. It is not probable, that any person would take the trouble of going to that remote staircase, for the purpose of fastening a door. If it was not fastened, when you entered the chamber, the wind, perhaps, shook the door and made the bolts slide. But I know not why I should undertake to account for so trifling an occurrence." This explanation was by no means satisfactory to Emily, who had observed, that the bolts were rusted, and consequently could not be thus easily moved; but she forbore to say so, and repeated her request.

"If you will not release yourself from the slavery of these fears," said Montoni, sternly, "at least forbear to torment others by the mention of them. Conquer such whims, and endeavour to strengthen your mind. No existence is more contemptible

than that, which is embittered by fear." As he said this, his eye glanced upon Madame Montoni, who coloured highly, but was still silent. Emily, wounded and disappointed, thought her fears were, in this instance, too reasonable to deserve ridicule, but, perceiving, that, however, they might oppress her, she must endure them, she tried to withdraw her attention from the subject.

Carlo soon after entered with some fruit : " Your *Excellenza* is tired after your long ramble," said he, as he set the fruit upon the table ; " but you have more to see after breakfast. There is a place in the vaulted passage leading to"——

Montoni frowned upon him, and waved his hand for him to leave the room. Carlo stopped, looked down and then added, as he advanced to the breakfast table, and took up the basket of fruit, "I made bold, your *Excellenza*, to bring some cherries, here, for my honoured lady and my young mistress. Will your ladyship taste them, madam ?" said Carlo, presenting the basket, " they are very fine ones, though I gathered them myself, and from an old tree, that catches all the south sun ; they are as big as plums, your ladyship."

" Very well, old Carlo," said Madame Montoni : " I am obliged to you."

" And the young Signora, too, she may like some of them," rejoined Carlo, turning with the basket to Emily, " it will do me good to see her eat some."

" Thank you, Carlo," said Emily taking some cherries, and smiling kindly.

" Come, come," said Montoni, impatiently, " enough of this. Leave the room. But be in waiting, I shall want you presently."

Carlo obeyed, and Montoni, soon after, went out to examine further into the state of the castle ; while Emily remained with her aunt, patiently enduring her ill humour, and endeavouring, with much sweetness, to sooth her affliction, instead of resenting its effect.

When Madame Montoni retired to her dressing room, Emily endeavoured to amuse herself by a view of the castle. Through a folding door, she passed from the great hall to the ramparts, which extended along the brow of the precipice, round three sides of the edifice ; the fourth was guarded by the high walls of the courts, and by the gateway, through which she had passed on the preceding evening. The grandeur of the broad ramparts, and the changing scenery they overlooked, excited her high admiration ; for the extent of the terraces allowed the sea-

tures of the country to be seen in such various points of view, that they appeared to form new landscapes. She often paused to examine the gothic magnificence of Udolpho, its proud irregularity, its lofty towers and battlements, its high arched, casements, and its slender watch towers, perched upon the corners of turrets. Then she would lean on the wall of the terrace, and, shuddering, measure with her eye the precipice below, till the dark summits of the woods arrested it. Wherever she turned, appeared mountain tops, forests of pine and narrow glens, opening among the Apennines and retiring from the sight into inaccessible regions.

While she thus leaned, Montoni, followed by two men, appeared, ascending a winding path, cut in the rock below. He stopped upon a cliff, and, pointing to the ramparts, turned to his followers, and talked with much eagerness of gesticulation.—Emily perceived that one of these men was Carlo; the other was in the dress of a peasant, and he alone seemed to be receiving the directions of Montoni.

She withdrew from the walls, and pursued her walk, till she heard at a distance the sound of carriage wheels, and then the loud bell of the portal, when it instantly occurred to her, that Count Morano was arrived. As she hastily passed the folding doors from the terrace, towards her own apartment, several persons entered the hall, by an opposite door. She saw them at the extremity of the arcades, and immediately retreated; but the agitation of her spirits, and the extent and duskiness of the hall, had prevented her from distinguishing the persons of the strangers. Her fears, however, had but one object, and they had called up that object to her fancy; she believed that she had seen Count Morano.

When she thought that they had passed the hall, she ventured again to the door, and proceeded, unobserved, to her room, where she remained, agitated with apprehensions, and listening to every distant sound. At length, hearing voices on the rampart she hastened to her window, and observed Montoni with Signor Cavigni, walking below, conversing earnestly, and often stopping and turning towards each other, at which times their discourse seemed to be uncommonly interesting.

Of the several persons who had appeared in the hall, here was Cavigni alone: but Emily's alarm was soon after heightened by the steps of some one in the corridor, who, she apprehended, brought a message from the Count. In the next moment Annette appeared.

"Ah! ma'amfelle," said she, "here is the Signor Cavigni arrived! I am sure I rejoiced to see a christian person in this

place ; and then he is so good natured too, he always takes so much notice of me !—And here is also Signor Verezzi, and who do you think besides, ma'amfelle ?”

“ I cannot guess, Annette ; tell me quickly.”

“ Nay, ma'am, do guess once.”

“ Well, then,” said Emily, with assumed composure, “ it is—Count Morano, I suppose.”

“ Holy Virgin !” cried Annette, “ are you ill, ma'amfelle ? you are going to faint ! let me get some water.”

“ Emily sunk into a chair ; “ Stay, Annette,” said she, feebly, “ do not leave me—I shall soon be better ; open the casement.—The Count, you say—he is come then ?”

“ Who, I !—the Count ! No, ma'amfelle, I did not say so.”

“ He is not come then ?” said Emily, eagerly. “ No, ma'amfelle.”

“ You are sure of it ?”

“ Lord bless me !” said Annette, “ you recover very suddenly ma'am ! why, I thought you was dying, just now.”

“ But the Count—you are sure, is not come ?”

“ O yes, quite sure of that, ma'amfelle. Why, I was looking out through the grate in the north turret, when the carriages drove into the court yard, and I never expected to see such a goodly fight in this dismal old castle !—but here are masters and servants too, enough to make the place ring again. O ! I was ready to leap through the rusty old bars, for joy—O ! who would ever have thought of seeing a christian face in this huge dreary house ? I could have kissed the very horses that brought them.”

“ Well, Annette, well, I am better now.”

Yes, ma'amfelle, I see you are. O ! all the servants will lead merry lives here, now ; we shall have singing and dancing in the little hall, for the Signor cannot hear us there—and droll stories—Ludovico's come, ma'am ; yes, there is Ludovico come with them ! You remember Ludovico, ma'am—a tall, handsome, young man—Signor Cavigni's lacquey—who always wears his cloak with such a grace, thrown round his left arm, and his hat set on so smartly, all on one side, and—

“ No,” said Emily, who was wearied by her loquacity.

“ What, ma'amfelle ! don't you remember Ludovico—who rowed the Cavaliero's gondola, at the last regatta, and won the prize ? And who used to sing such sweet verses about Orlando's and about the Black-a-moors, too ; and Charly—Charly—mange, yes, that was the name, all under my lattice, in the west portico, on the moonlight nights at Venice ? O ! I have listened to him ?”

"I fear, to thy peril, my good Annette," said Emily; "for it seems his verses have stolen thy heart. But let me advise you; if it is so, keep the secret; never let him know it."

"Ah—ma'amfelle!—how can one keep such a secret as that?"

"Well, Annette, I am now so much better, that you may leave me."

"O, but, ma'amfelle, I forgot to ask—how did you sleep in this dreary old chamber last night?"—"As well as usual."

"Did you hear no noises?"—"None."

"Nor see any thing?"

"Nothing."

"Well, that is surprising!"—"Not in the least:

and now tell me, why you ask these questions."

"O, ma'amfelle! I would not tell you for the world, nor all I

have heard about this chamber, either; it would frighten you so?"

"If that is all, you have frightened me already, and may

therefore tell me what you know, without hurting your

conscience."

"O Lord! they say the room is haunted, and has been so

these many years."

"It is by a ghost, then, who can draw bolts," said Emily,

endeavouring to laugh away her apprehensions; "for I left that

door open, last night, and found it fastened this morning."

Annette turned pale, and said not a word.

"Do you know whether any of the servants fastened this door

in the morning before I rose?"

"No, ma'am, that I will be bound they did not; but I

don't know: shall I go and ask ma'amfelle?" said Annette,

moving hastily towards the corridor.

"Stay, Annette, I have other questions to ask; tell me what

you have heard concerning this room, and whither that staircase

leads."

"I will go and ask it all directly, ma'am; besides I am sure

my lady wants me. I cannot stay now, indeed, ma'am."

She hurried from the room, without waiting Emily's reply,

whose heart, lightened by the certainty, that Morano was not

arrived, allowed her to smile at the superstitious terror, which

had seized on Annette; for, though she sometimes felt its influence

herself, she could smile at it, when apparent in other

persons.

Montoni having refused Emily another chamber, she determin-

ed to bear with patience the evil she could not remove, and, in

order to make the room as comfortable as possible, unpacked her

books, her sweet delight in happier days, and her soothing re-

source in the hours of moderate sorrow: but, there were hours when

even these failed of their effect; when the genius, the taste, the enthusiasm of the sublimest writers were felt no longer.

Her little library being arranged on a high chest, part of the furniture of the room, she took out her drawing utensils, and was tranquil enough to be pleased with the thought of sketching the sublime scenes, beheld from her windows; but she suddenly checked this pleasure, remembering how often she had soothed herself by the intention of obtaining amusement of this kind, and had been prevented by some new circumstance of misfortune.

"How can I suffer myself to be deluded by hope," said she, "and, because Count Morano is not yet arrived, feel a momentary happiness? Alas! what is it to me, whether he is here to-day, or to-morrow, if he comes at all?—and that he will come—it were weakness to doubt."

To withdraw her thoughts, however, from the subject of her misfortunes, she attempted to read, but her attention wandered from the page, and, at length, she threw aside the book, and determined to explore the adjoining chambers of the castle. Her imagination was pleased with the view of ancient grandeur, and an emotion of melancholy awe awakened all its powers, as she walked through rooms, obscure and desolate, where no footsteps had passed probably for many years, and remembered the strange history of the former possessor of the edifice. This brought to her recollection the veiled picture, which had attracted her curiosity, on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. As she passed through the chambers, that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated; its connection with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil, throwing a mystery over the subject, that excited a faint degree of terror. But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object, from which we appear to shrink.

Emily passed on with faltering steps, and having paused a moment at the door, before she attempted to open it, she then hastily entered the chamber, and went towards the picture, which appeared to be enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again, and then with a timid hand, lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall—perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and, before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor.

When she recovered her recollection, the remembrance of what she had seen had nearly deprived her of it a second time.

She had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own ; and, when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind, and excluded, for a time, all sense of past, and dread of future misfortune : she seated herself near the casement, because from thence she heard voices, though distant, on the terrace, and might see people pass, and these, trifling as they were, were reviving circumstances. When her spirits had recovered their tone, she considered, whether she should mention what she had seen to Madame Montoni, and various and important motives urged her to do so, among which the least was the hope of the relief, which an overburdened mind finds in speaking of the subject of its interest. But she was aware of the terrible consequences, which such a communication might lead to ; and, dreading the indiscretion of her aunt, at length, endeavoured to arm herself with resolution to observe a profound silence, on the subject. Montoni and Verezzi soon after passed under the casement, speaking cheerfully, and their voices revived her. Presently the Signors Bertolini and Cavigni joined the party on the terrace, and Emily, supposing that Madame Montoni was then alone, went to seek her ; for the solitude of her chamber, and its proximity to that where she had received so severe a shock, again affected her spirits.

She found her aunt in her dressing room, preparing for dinner. Emily's pale and affrighted countenance alarmed even Madame Montoni ; but she had sufficient strength of mind to be silent on the subject, that still made her shudder, and which was ready to burst from her lips. In her aunt's apartment she remained, till they both descended to dinner. There she met the gentlemen lately arrived, who had a kind of busy seriousness in their looks, which was somewhat unusual with them, while their thoughts seemed too much occupied by some deep interest, to suffer them to bestow much attention either on Emily, or Madame Montoni. They spoke little, and Montoni less. Emily, as she now looked on him, shuddered. The horror of the chamber rushed on her mind. Several times the colour faded from her cheeks, and she feared, that illness would betray her emotions, and compel her to leave the room ; but the strength of her resolution remedied the weakness of her frame ; she obliged herself to converse, and even tried to look cheerful.

Montoni evidently laboured under some vexation, such as would probably have agitated a weaker mind, or a more susceptible heart, but which appeared, from the sternness of his countenance, only to bend up his faculties to energy and fortitude.

It was a comfortless and silent meal. The gloom of the castle seemed to have spread its contagion even over the gay countenance of Cavigni, and with this gloom was mingled a fierceness, such as she had seldom seen him indicate. Count Morano was not named, and what conversation there was, turned chiefly upon the wars, which at that time agitated the Italian states, the strength of the Venetian armies, and the characters of their generals.

After dinner, when the servants had withdrawn, Emily learned, that the cavalier who had drawn upon himself the vengeance of Orsino, had since died of his wounds, and that strict search was still making for his murderer. The intelligence seemed to disturb Montoni, who mused, and then inquired, where Orsino had concealed himself. His guests, who all, except Cavigni, were ignorant, that Montoni had himself assisted him to escape from Venice, replied, that he had fled in the night with such precipitation and secrecy, that his most intimate companions knew not whither. Montoni blamed himself for having asked the question, for a second thought convinced him, that a man of Orsino's suspicious temper was not likely to trust any of the persons present with the knowledge of his asylum. He considered himself, however, as entitled to his utmost confidence, and did not doubt, that he should soon hear of him.

Emily retired with Madame Montoni, soon after the cloth was withdrawn, and left the cavaliers to their secret councils, but not before the significant frowns of Montoni had warned his wife to depart, who passed from the hall to the ramparts, and walked, for sometime, in silence, which Emily did not interrupt, for her mind was also occupied by interests of its own. It required all her resolution, to forbear communicating to Madame Montoni the terrible subject, which still thrilled her every nerve with horror; and sometimes she was on the point of doing so, merely to obtain the relief of a moment; but she knew how wholly she was in the power of Montoni, and, considering, that the indiscretion of her aunt, might prove fatal to them both, she compelled herself to endure a present and an inferior evil, rather than to tempt a future and a heavier one. A strange kind of presentiment frequently, on this day occurred to her;—it seemed as if her fate rested here, and was by some invisible means connected with this castle.

"Let me not accelerate it," said she to herself: "for whatever I may be reserved, let me, at least avoid self reproach."

As she looked on the massy walls of the edifice, her melancholy spirits represented it to be her prison; and she started as at a

new suggestion, when she considered how far distant she was from her native country, from her little peaceful home, and from her only friend—how remote was her hope of happiness, how feeble the expectation of again seeing him ! Yet the idea of Valancourt, and her confidence in his faithful love, had hitherto been her only solace, and she struggled hard to retain them. A few tears of agony started to her eyes, which she turned aside to conceal.

While she afterwards leaned on the wall of the rampart, some peasants, at a little distance, were seen examining a breach, before which lay a heap of stones, as if to repair it, and a rusty old cannon that appeared to have fallen from its station above. Madame Montoni stopped to speak to the men, and inquired what they were going to do. "To repair the fortifications, your ladyship," said one of them ; a labour which she was somewhat surprised, that Montoni should think necessary, particularly since he had never spoken of the castle as of a place, at which he meant to reside for any considerable time ; but she passed on towards a lofty arch, that led from the south to the east rampart, and which adjoined the castle, on one side, while, on the other, it supported a small watch-tower, that entirely commanded the deep valley below. As she approached this arch, she saw, beyond it, winding along the woody descent of a distant mountain, a long troop of horse and foot, whom she knew to be soldiers, only by the glitter of their pikes and other arms, for the distance did not allow her to discover the colour of their liveries. As she gazed, the vanguard issued from the woods into the valley, but the train still continued to pour over the remote summit of the mountain, in endless succession ; while, in the front, the military uniform became distinguishable, and the commanders, riding first, and seeming, by their gestures, to direct the march of those that followed, at length, approached very near to the castle.

Such a spectacle, in these solitary regions, both surprised and alarmed Madame Montoni, and she hastened towards some peasants, who were employed in raising bastions before the south rampart, where the rock was less abrupt than elsewhere. These men could give no satisfactory answers to her inquiries, but, being roused by them, gazed in stupid astonishment upon the long cavalcade. Madame Montoni, then thinking it necessary to communicate farther the subject of her alarm, sent Emily to say, that she wished to speak to Montoni ; an errand her niece did not approve, for she dreaded his frowns, which she knew this message would provoke ; but she obeyed in silence.

As she drew near the apartment, in which he sat with his guests, she heard them in earnest and loud dispute, and she paused a moment, trembling at the displeasure, which her sudden interruption would occasion. In the next, their voices sunk altogether; she then ventured to open the door, and, while Montoni turned hastily and looked at her, without speaking, she delivered her message.

"Tell Madam Montoni I am engaged," said he.

Emily then thought it proper to mention the subject of her alarm. Montoni and his companions rose instantly and went to the windows, but, these not affording them a view of the troops, they at length proceeded to the ramparts, where Cavigni conjectured it to be a legion of *Condottieri*, on their march towards Modena.

One part of the cavalcade now extended along the valley, and another wound among the mountains towards the north, while some troops still lingered on the woody precipices, where the first had appeared, so that the great length of the procession seemed to include an whole army. While Montoni and his family watched its progress, they heard the sound of trumpets and the clash of cymbals in the vale, and then others, answering from the heights. Emily listened with emotion to the shrill blast, that woke the echoes of the mountains, and Montoni explained the signals, with which he appeared to be well acquainted, and which meant nothing hostile. The uniforms of the troops, and the kind of arms they bore, confirmed to him the conjecture of Cavigni, and he had the satisfaction to see them pass by, without even stopping to gaze upon his castle. He did not, however, leave the rampart, till the bases of the mountains had shut them from his view, and the last murmur of the trumpet floated away on the wind. Cavigni and Verezzi were inspirited by this spectacle, which seemed to have roused all the fire of their temper; Montoni turned into the castle in thoughtful silence.

Emily's mind had not yet sufficiently recovered from its late shock, to endure the loneliness of her chamber, and she remained upon the ramparts; for Madame Montoni had not invited her to her dressing room, whither she had gone evidently in low spirits, and Emily, from her late experience, had lost all wish to explore the gloomy and mysterious recesses of the castle. The ramparts, therefore, were almost her only retreat, and here she lingered, till the gray haze of evening was again spread over the scene.

The cavaliers supped by themselves, and Madame Montoni remained in her apartment, whither Emily went, before she retired

to her own. She found her aunt weeping, and in much agitation. The tenderness of Emily was naturally so soothing, that it seldom failed to give comfort to the drooping heart : but Madame Montoni's was torn, and the softest accents of Emily's voice were lost upon it. With her usual delicacy, she did not appear to observe her aunt's distress, but it gave an involuntary gentleness to her manners, and an air of solicitude to her countenance, which Madame Montoni was vexed to perceive, who seemed to feel the pity of her niece to be an insult to her pride, and dismissed her as soon as she properly could. Emily did not venture to mention again the reluctance she felt to her gloomy chamber, but she requested that Annette might be permitted to remain with her till she retired to rest ; and the request was somewhat reluctantly granted. Annette, however, was now with the servants, and Emily withdrew alone.

With light and hasty steps she passed through the long galleries, while the feeble glimmer of the lamp she carried only shewed the gloom around her, and the passing air threatened to extinguish it. The lonely silence, that reigned in this part of the castle, awed her ; now and then, indeed, she heard a faint peal of laughter rise from a remote part of the edifice, where the servants were assembled, but it was soon lost, and a kind of breathless stillness remained. As she passed the suite of rooms which she had visited in the morning, her eyes glanced fearfully on the door, and she almost fancied she heard murmuring sounds within, but she paused not a moment to inquire.

Having reached her own apartment, where no blazing wood on the hearth dissipated the gloom, she sat down with a book, to enliven her attention, till Annette should come, and a fire could be kindled. She continued to read till her light was nearly expired, but Annette did not appear, and the solitude and obscurity of her chamber again affected her spirits, the more, because of its nearness to the scene of horror, that she had witnessed in the morning. Gloomy and fantastic images came to her mind. She looked fearfully towards the door of the staircase, and then, examining whether it was still fastened, found that it was so. Unable to conquer the uneasiness she felt at the prospect of sleeping again in this remote and insecure apartment, which some person seemed to have entered during the preceding night, her impatience to see Annette, whom she had bidden to inquire concerning this circumstance, became extremely painful. She wished also to question her, as to the object, which had excited so much horror in her own mind, and which Annette on the preceding evening had appeared to be in part acquainted with, though her words were

very remote from the truth, and it appeared plainly to Emily, that the girl had been purposely misled by a false report : above all she was surprised, that the door of the chamber, which contained it, should be left unguarded. Such an instance of negligence almost surpassed belief. But her light was now expiring ; the faint flashes it threw upon the walls called up all the terrors of fancy, and she rose to find her way to the habitable part of the castle, before it was quite extinguished.

As she opened the chamber door, she heard remote voices, and, soon after, saw a light issue upon the further end of the corridor, which Annette and another servant approached. " I am glad you are come," said Emily : " what has detained you so long ? Pray light me a fire immediately."

" My lady wanted me, ma'amselle," replied Annette in some confusion ; " I will go and get the wood."

" No," said Caterina, " that is my business," and left the room instantly, while Annette would have followed ; but, being called back, she began to talk very loud, and, laugh, and seemed afraid to trust a pause of silence.

Caterina soon returned with the wood, and then, when the cheerful blaze once more animated the room, and this servant had withdrawn, Emily asked Annette, whether she had made the inquiry she bade her. " Yes, ma'amselle," said Annette, " but not a soul knows any thing about the matter : and old Carlo,— I watched him well, for they say he knows strange things—old Carlo looked so as I don't know how to tell, and he asked me again and again, if I was sure the door was ever unfastened. Lord, says I— am I sure I am alive ? And as for me, ma'am I am all astounded, as one may say, and would no more sleep in this chamber, than I would on the great cannon at the end of the east rampart." " And what objection have you to that cannon, more than to any of the rest ?" said Emily smiling : " the best would be rather a hard bed."

" Yes, ma'amselle, any of them would be hard enough for that matter ; but they do say, that something has been seen in the dead of night, standing beside the great cannon as if to guard it."

" Well ! my good Annette, the people who tell such stories, are happy in having you for an auditor, for I perceive you believe them all."

" Dear ma'amselle ! I will shew you the very cannon ; you can see it from these windows !"

" Well" said Emily, " but that does not prove, that an apparition guards it,"

"What! not if I shew you the very cannon! Dear ma'am, you will believe nothing."

"Nothing probably upon this subject, but what I see," said Emily.—"Well, ma'am, but you shall see it, if you will only step this way to the casement."—Emily could not forbear laughing, and Annette looked surpris'd. Perceiving her extreme aptitude to credit the marvellous, Emily forbore to mention the subject she had intended, lest it should overcome her with ideal terrors, and she began to speak on a lively topic—the regattas of Venice.

"Aye, ma'amfelle, those rowing matches," said Annette, and the fine moonlight nights, are all, that are worth seeing in Venice. To be sure that moon is brighter than any I ever saw; and then to hear such sweet music, too, as Ludovico has often and often sung under the lattice by the west portico! Ma'amfelle, it was Ludovico, that told me about that picture, which you wanted so to look at last night, and—"

"What picture?" said Emily, wishing Annette to explain herself.

"O! that terrible picture with the black veil over it."

"You never saw it, then?" said Emily.

"Who, I!—No, ma'amfelle, I never did. But this morning," continued Annette, lowering her voice, and looking round the room, "this morning, as it was broad daylight, do you know, ma'am, I took a strange fancy to see it, as I had heard such odd hints about it, and I got as far as the door, and should have opened it, if it had not been locked!"

Emily endeavouring to conceal the emotion this circumstance occasioned, inquired at what hour she went to the chamber, and found, that it was soon after herself had been there. She also asked further questions, and the answers convinced her, that Annette, and probably her informer, were ignorant of the terrible truth, though in Annette's account something very like the truth, now and then, mingled with the falsehood. Emily now began to fear, that her visit to the chamber had been observed, since the door had been closed, so immediately after her departure; and dreaded lest this should draw upon her the vengeance of Montoni. Her anxiety, also was excited, to know whence, and for what purpose, the delusive report, which had been imposed upon Annette, had originated, since Montoni could only have wished for silence and secrecy; but she felt, that the subject was too terrible for this lonely hour, and she compelled herself to leave it, to converse with Annette, whose chat, simple as it was, she preferred to the stillness of total solitude.

Thus they sat, till near midnight, but not without many hints from Annette, that she wished to go. The embers were now nearly burnt out ; and Emily heard, at a distance, the thundering sound of the hall doors, as they were shut for the night. She, therefore, prepared for rest, but was still unwilling that Annette should leave her. At this instant, the great bell of the portal sounded. They listened in fearful expectation, when, after a long pause of silence, it sounded again. Soon after, they heard the noise of carriage wheels in the court yard. Emily sunk almost lifeless in her chair ; “ It is the Count,” said she.

“ What, at this time of night, ma’am !” said Annette : “ no, my dear lady. But, for that matter, it is a strange time of night for any body to come !”

“ Nay, pr’ythee, good Annette, stay not talking,” said Emily in a voice of agony—“ Go, pr’ythee, go, and see who it is.”

Annette left the room, and carried with her the light, leaving Emily in darkness, which a few moments before would have terrified her in this room, but was now scarcely observed by her. She listened and waited, in breathless expectation, and heard distant noises, but Annette did not return. Her patience, at length, exhausted, she tried to find her way to the corridor, but it was long before she could touch the door of the chamber, and, when she had opened it, the total darkness without made her fear to proceed. Voices were now heard, and Emily even thought she distinguished those of Count Morano, and Montoni. Soon after, she heard steps approaching, and then a ray of light streamed through the darkness, and Annette appeared, whom Emily went to meet.

“ Yes, ma’amfelle,” said she, “ you was-right, it is the Count sure enough.”

“ It is he !” exclaimed Emily, lifting her eyes towards heaven and supporting herself by Annette’s arm.

“ Good Lord ! my dear lady, don’t be in such a *fluster*, and look so pale, we shall soon hear more.”

“ We shall, indeed !” said Emily, moving as fast as she was able towards her apartment. “ I am not well ; give me air.”—Annette opened a casement, and brought water. The faintness soon left Emily, but she desired Annette would not go till she heard from Montoni.

“ Dear ma’amfelle ! he surely will not disturb you at this time of night ; why, he must think you are asleep.”

“ Stay with me till I am so, then,” said Emily, who felt temporary relief from this suggestion, which appeared probable

enough, though her fears had prevented its occurring to her. Annette, with secret reluctance, consented to stay, and Emily was now composed enough to ask her some questions; among others, whether she had seen the Count.

"Yes, ma'am, I saw him alight, for I went from hence to the grate in the north turret, that overlooks the inner court yard, you know. There I saw the Count's carriage, and the Count in it, waiting at the great door,—for the porter was just gone to bed—with several men on horseback all by the light of the torches they carried."—Emily was compelled to smile. "When the door was opened, the Count said something that I could not make out, and then got out, and another gentleman with him. I thought, to be sure, the Signor was gone to bed, and I hastened away to my lady's dressing room, to see what I could hear. But in the way I met Ludovico, and he told me that the Signor was up, counselling with his master and the other Signors, in the room at the end of the north gallery; and Ludovico held up his finger, and laid it on his lips, as much as to say—There is more going on, than you think of, Annette, but you must hold your tongue. And so I did hold my tongue, ma'amfelle, and came away to tell you directly."

Emily inquired who the cavalier was, that accompanied the Count, and how Montoni received them; but Annette could not inform her.

"Ludovico," she added, "has just been to call Signor Montoni's valet, that he might tell him they were arrived, when I met him."

Emily sat musing, for sometime, and then her anxiety was so much increased, that she desired Annette would go to the servants' hall, where it was possible she might hear something of the Count's intention, respecting his stay at the castle.

"Yes, ma'am," said Annette with readiness; "but how am I to find the way, if I leave the lamp with you?"

Emily said she would light her, and they immediately quitted the chamber. When they had reached the top of the great staircase, Emily recollected, that she might be seen by the Count, and, to avoid the great hall, Annette conducted her through some private passages to a back staircase, which led directly to that of the servants.

As she returned towards her chamber, Emily began to fear, that she might again lose herself in the intricacies of the castle, and again be shocked by some mysterious spectacle; and, though she was already perplexed by the numerous turnings, she feared

to open one of the many doors, that offered. While she stepped thoughtfully along, she fancied, that she heard a low moaning at no great distance, and, having paused a moment, she heard it again and distinctly. Several doors appeared on the right hand of the passage. She advanced, and listened. When she came to the second, she heard a voice, apparently in complaint, within, to which she continued to listen, afraid to open the door, and unwilling to leave it. Convulsive sobs followed, and then the piercing accents of an agonizing spirit burst forth. Emily stood appalled, and looked through the gloom that surrounded her, in fearful expectation. The lamentations continued. Pity now began to subdue terror; it was possible she might administer comfort to the sufferer, at least by expressing sympathy, and she laid her hand on the door. While she hesitated she thought she knew this voice, disguised as it was by tones of grief. Having, therefore, set down the lamp in the passage, she gently opened the door, within which all was dark, except that from an inner apartment a partial light appeared; and she stepped softly on. Before she reached it, the appearance of Madame Montoni, leaning on her dressing table, weeping, and with a handkerchief held to her eyes, struck her, and she paused.

Some person was seated in a chair by the fire, but who it was she could not distinguish. He spoke, now and then, in a low voice, that did not allow Emily to hear what was uttered, but she thought, that Madame Montoni, at those times, wept the more, who was too much occupied by her own distress, to observe Emily, while the latter, though anxious to know what occasioned this, and who was the person admitted at so late an hour to her aunt's dressing room, forbore to add to her sufferings by surprising her, or to take advantage of her situation, by listening to a private discourse. She, therefore, stepped softly back, and, after, some further difficulty, found the way to her own chamber, where nearer interests, at length, excluded the surprise and concern she had felt, respecting Madame Montoni.

Annette, however, returned without satisfactory intelligence, for the servants, among whom she had been, were either entirely ignorant, or affected to be so, concerning the Count's intended stay at the castle. They could talk only of the steep and broken road they had just passed, and of the numerous dangers they had escaped, and express wonder how their lord could choose to encounter all these in the darkness of night; for they scarcely allowed, that the torches had served for any other purpose but that of shewing the dreariness of the mountains. Annette, finding

she could gain no information, left them, making noisy petitions, for more wood on the fire and more supper on the table.

"And now, ma'amfelle," added she, "I am so sleepy!—I am sure, if you was so sleepy, you would not desire me to sit up with you."

Emily, indeed, began to think it was cruel to wish it; she had also waited so long, without receiving a summons from Montoni, that it appeared he did not mean to disturb her, at this late hour, and she determined to dismiss Annette. But, when she again looked round her gloomy chamber, and recollected certain circumstances, fear seized her spirits, and she hesitated.

"And yet it were cruel of me to ask you to stay, till I am asleep, Annette," said she, "for I fear it will be very long before I forget myself in sleep."

"I dare say it will be very long, ma'amfelle," said Annette.

"But, before you go," rejoined Emily, "let me ask you—Had Signor Montoni left Count Morano, when you quitted the hall?"

"O no, ma'am, they were alone together."

"Have you been in my aunt's dressing room, since you left me?"

"No ma'amfelle, I called at the door as I passed, but it was fastened; so I thought my lady was gone to bed."

"Who, then, was with your lady just now?" said Emily, forgetting in surprise, her usual prudence.

"Nobody, I believe, ma'am," replied Annette, "nobody has been with her, I believe, since I left you."

Emily took no further notice of the subject, and, after some struggle with imaginary fears, her good nature prevailed over them so far, that she dismissed Annette for the night. She then sat, musing upon her own circumstances and those of Madame Montoni, till her eye rested on the miniature picture, which she had found, after her father's death, among the papers he had enjoined her to destroy. It was open upon the table, before her, among some loose drawings, having, with them, been taken out of a little box by Emily, some hours before. The sight of it called up many interesting reflections, but the melancholy sweetness of the countenance soothed the emotions, which these had occasioned. It was the same style of countenance as that of her late father, and, while she gazed on it with fondness on this account, she even fancied a resemblance in the features. But this tranquillity was suddenly interrupted, when she recollected the words in the manuscript, that had been found with this picture, and which had

formerly occasioned her so much doubt and horror. At length, she roused herself from the deep reverie, into which this remembrance had thrown her; but, when she rose to undress, the silence and solitude, to which she was left, at this midnight hour, for not even a distant sound was now heard, conspired with the impression the subject she had been considering had given to her mind, to appall her. Annette's hints, too, concerning this chamber, simple as they were, had not failed to affect her, since they followed a circumstance of peculiar horror, which she herself had witnessed, and since the scene of this was a chamber nearly adjoining her own.

The door of the staircase, was, perhaps, a subject of more reasonable alarm, and she now began to apprehend, such was the aptitude of her fears, that this staircase had some private communication with the apartment, which she shuddered even to remember. Determined not to undress, she lay down to sleep in her clothes, with her late father's dog, the faithful *Manchon*, at the foot of the bed, whom she considered as a kind of guard.

Thus circumstanced, she tried to banish reflection, but her busy fancy would still hover over the subjects of her interest, and she heard the clock of the castle strike two, before she closed her eyes.

From the disturbed slumber, into which she then sunk, she was soon awakened by a noise, which seemed to arise within her chamber; but the silence, that prevailed, as she fearfully listened, inclined her to believe, that she had been alarmed by such sounds as sometimes occur in dreams, and she laid her head again upon the pillow.

A return of the noise again disturbed her; it seemed to come from that part of the room, which communicated with the private staircase, and she instantly remembered the odd circumstance of the door having been fastened, during the preceding night, by some unknown hand. Her late alarming suspicion, concerning its communication, also occurred to her. Her heart became faint with terror. Half raising herself from the bed, and gently drawing aside the curtain, she looked towards the door of the staircase, but the lamp, that burnt on the hearth, spread so feeble a light through the apartment, that the remote parts of it were lost in shadow. The noise, however, which, she was convinced, came from the door, continued. It seemed like that made by the undrawing of rusty bolts, and often ceased, and was then renewed more gently, as if the hand, that occasioned it, was restrained by a fear of discovery. While Emily kept her eyes

fixed on the spot, she saw the door move, and then slowly open, and perceived something enter the room, but the extreme duski-ness prevented her distinguishing what it was. Almost fainting with terror, she had yet sufficient command over herself, to check the shriek, that was escaping from her lips, and letting the curtain drop from her hand, continued to observe in silence the motions of the mysterious form she saw. It seemed to glide along the remote obscurity of the apartment, then paused, and, as it approached the hearth, she perceived, in the stronger light, what appeared to be a human figure. Certain remembrances now struck upon her heart, and almost subdued the feeble remains of her spirits; she continued, however, to watch the figure, which remained for sometime motionless, but then, advancing slowly towards the bed, stood silently at the feet, where the curtains, being a little open, allowed her still to see it; terror, however, had now deprived her of the power of discrimination, as well as that of utterance.

Having continued there a moment, the form retreated towards the hearth, when it took the lamp, held it up, surveyed the chamber, for a few moments, and then again advanced towards the bed. The light at that instant awakening the dog, that had slept at Emily's feet, he barked loudly, and, jumping to the floor, flew at the stranger, who struck the animal smartly with a sheathed sword, and, springing towards the bed, Emily discovered—Count Morano!

She gazed at him for a moment in speechless affright, while he, throwing himself on his knee at the bed side, besought her to fear nothing, and, having thrown down his sword, would have taken her hand, when the faculties, that terror had suspended, suddenly returned, and she sprung from the bed, in the dress, which surely a kind of prophetic apprehension had prevented her, on this night, from throwing aside.

Morano rose, followed her to the door, through which he had entered, and caught her hand, as she reached the top of the staircase, but not before she had discovered, by the gleam of a lamp, another man half way down the steps. She now screamed in despair, and, believing herself given up by Montoni, saw, indeed, no possibility of escape.

The Count, who still held her hand, led her back into the chamber.

"Why all this terror?" said he, in a tremulous voice.—
"Hear me, Emily: I come not to alarm you; no, by Heaven! I love you too well—too well for my own peace."

Emily looked at him for a moment, in fearful doubt.

"Then leave me fir," said she, "leave me instantly."

"Hear me, Emily," resumed Morano; "hear me! I love, and am in despair—yes—in despair. How can I gaze upon you, and know, that it is, perhaps, for the last time, without suffering all the phrensy of despair? But it shall not be so; you shall be mine, in spite of Montoni and all his villainy."

"In spite of Montoni!" cried Emily eagerly: "what is it I hear?"

"You hear, that Montoni is a villain," exclaimed Morano with vehemence,— "a villain who would have sold you to my love!—Who—"

"And is he less who would have bought me?" said Emily, fixing on the Count an eye of calm contempt. "Leave the room, sir, instantly," she continued in a voice, trembling between joy and fear, "or I will alarm the family, and you may receive that from Signor Montoni's vengeance, which I have vainly supplicated from his pity." But Emily knew, that she was beyond the hearing of those, who might protect her.

"You can never hope any thing from his pity," said Morano, "he has used me infamously, and my vengeance shall pursue him. And for you, Emily, for you, he has new plans more profitable than the last, no doubt." The gleam of hope, which the Count's former speech had revived, was now nearly extinguished by the latter; and, while Emily's countenance betrayed the emotions of her mind, he endeavoured to take advantage of the discovery.

"I lose time," said he: "I came not to exclaim against Montoni; I came to solicit, to plead—to Emily; to tell her all I suffer, to entreat her to save me from despair, and herself from destruction. Emily! the schemes of Montoni are insearchable, but I warn you, they are terrible; he has no principle, when interest, or ambition leads. Can I love you, and abandon you to his power? Fly, then, fly from this gloomy prison, with a lover, who adores you! I have bribed a servant of the castle to open the gates, and, before to-morrow's dawn, you shall be far on the way to Venice."

Emily, overcome by the sudden shock she had received, at the moment, too, when she had begun to hope for better days, now thought she saw destruction surround her on every side. Unable to reply, and almost to think, she threw herself into a chair, pale and breathless. That Montoni had formerly sold her to Morano, was very probable; that he had now withdrawn,

his consent to the marriage, was evident from the Count's present conduct; and it was nearly certain, that a scheme of stronger interest only could have induced the selfish Montoni to forego a plan, which he had hitherto so strenuously pursued. These reflections made her tremble at the hints, which Morano had just given, which she no longer hesitated to believe; and while she shrunk from the new scenes of misery and oppression, that might await her in the castle of Udolpho, she was compelled to observe, that almost her only means of escaping them was by submitting herself to the protection of this man, with whom evils more certain and not less terrible appeared,—evils, upon which she could not endure to pause for an instant.

Her silence, though it was that of agony, encouraged the hopes of Morano, who watched her countenance with impatience, took again the resisting hand she had withdrawn, and, as he pressed it to his heart, again conjured her to determine immediately. "Every moment we lose, will make our departure more dangerous," said he: "these few moments lost may enable Montoni to overtake us."

"I beseech, you, sir, be silent," said Emily faintly: "I am indeed very wretched, and wretched I must remain. Leave me—I command you, leave me to my fate."

"Never!" cried the Count vehemently: "let me perish first! But forgive my violence! the thought of losing you is madness. You cannot be ignorant of Montoni's character, you may be ignorant of his schemes—nay, you must be so, or you would not hesitate between my love and his power."

"Nor do I hesitate," said Emily.

"Let us go, then," said Morano, eagerly kissing her hand, and rising, "my carriage waits, below the castle walls."

"You mistake me, sir," said Emily. "Allow me to thank you for the interest you express in my welfare, and to decide by my own choice. I shall remain under the protection of Signor Montoni."

"Under his protection!" exclaimed Morano, proudly, "his *protection*! Emily, why will you suffer yourself to be thus deluded? I have already told you what you have to expect from his *protection*."

"And pardon me, sir, if, in this instance, I doubt mere assertion, and, to be convinced, require something approaching to proof."

"I have now neither the time, or the means of adducing proof," replied the Count.

"Nor have I, sir, the inclination to listen to it, if you had."

"But you trifle with my patience and my distress," continued Morano. "Is a marriage with a man, who adores you, so very terrible in your eyes, that you would prefer it to all the misery, to which Montoni may condemn you in this remote prison? Some wretch must have stolen those affections, which ought to be mine, or you could not thus obstinately persist in refusing an offer, that would place you beyond the reach of oppression." Morano walked about the room, with quick steps, and a disturbed air.

"This discourse, Count Morano, sufficiently proves, that my affections ought not to be yours," said Emily, mildly, "and this conduct, that I should not be placed beyond the reach of oppression, so long as I remained in your power. If you wish me to believe otherwise, cease to oppress me any longer by your presence. If you refuse this, you will compel me to expose you to the resentment of Signor Montoni."

"Yes, let him come," cried Morano furiously, "and brave *my* resentment! Let him dare to face once more the man he has so courageously injured; danger shall teach him morality, and vengeance justice—let him come, and receive my sword in his heart!"

The vehemence, with which this was uttered, gave Emily new cause of alarm, who arose from her chair, but her trembling frame refused to support her, and she resumed her seat;—the words died on her lips, and, when she looked wistfully towards the door of the corridor, which was locked, she considered it was impossible for her to leave the apartment, before Morano would be apprised of, and able to counteract, her intention.

Without observing her agitation, he continued to pace the room in the utmost perturbation of spirits. His darkened countenance expressed all the rage of jealousy and revenge; and a person, who had seen his features under the smile of ineffable tenderness, which he so lately assumed, would now scarcely have believed them to be the same.

"Count Morano," said Emily, at length recovering her voice, "calm, I entreat you, these transports, and listen to reason, if you will not to pity. You have equally misplaced your love and your hatred. I never could have returned the affection, with which you honour me, and certainly have never encouraged it; neither has Signor Montoni injured you, for you must have known, that he had no right to dispose of my hand, had he even possessed the power to do so. Leave, then, leave the castle;

while you may with safety. Spare yourself the dreadful consequences of an unjust revenge, and the remorse of having prolonged to me these moments of suffering."

"Is it for mine, or for Montoni's safety that you are thus alarmed?" said Morano, coldly, and turning towards her with a look of acrimony.

"For both," replied Emily in a trembling voice.

"Unjust revenge!" cried the Count, resuming the abrupt tones of passion. "Who that looks upon that face, can imagine a punishment adequate to the injury he would have done me? Yes, I will leave the castle; but it shall not be alone. I have trifled too long. Since my prayers and my sufferings cannot prevail, force shall. I have people in waiting, who shall convey you to my carriage. Your voice will bring no succour; it cannot be heard from this remote part of the castle; submit, therefore in silence to go with me."

This was an unnecessary injunction, at present; for Emily was too certain, that her call would avail her nothing; and terror had so entirely disordered her thoughts, that she knew not how to plead to Morano, but sat, mute and trembling, in her chair, till he advanced to lift her from it, when she suddenly raised herself and with a repulsive gesture, and a countenance of forced serenity, said, "Count Morano! I am now in your power; but you will observe, that this is not the conduct which can win the esteem you appear so solicitous to obtain, and that you are preparing for yourself a load of remorse, in the miseries of a friendless orphan, which can never leave you. Do you believe your heart to be, indeed, so hardened, that you can look without emotion on the suffering, to which you would condemn me?"—

Emily was interrupted by the growling of the dog, who now came again from the bed, and Morano looked towards the door of the staircase, where no person appearing, he called aloud, "Cesario!"

"Emily," said the Count, "why will you reduce me to adopt this conduct? How much more willingly would I persuade, than compel you to become my wife! but, by Heaven! I will not leave you to be sold by Montoni. Yet a thought glances across my mind, that brings madness with it.—I know not how to name it. It is preposterous—it cannot be.—Yet you tremble—you grow pale! It is! it is so;—you—you—love Montoni!" cried Morano, grasping Emily's wrist, and stamping his foot on the floor.

An involuntary air of surprise appeared on her countenance. "If you have indeed believed so," said she, "believe so still."

"That look, those words confirm it," exclaimed Morano, furiously. "No, no, no, Montoni had a richer prize in view, than gold. But he shall not live to triumph over me!—This very instant—"

He was interrupted by the loud barking of the dog.

"Stay, Count Morano," said Emily, terrified by his words, and by the fury expressed in his eyes, "I will save you from this error.—Of all men, Signor Montoni is not your rival; though, if I find all other means of saving myself vain, I will try whether my voice may not arouse his servants to my succour."

"Assertion," replied Morano, "at such a moment, is not to be depended upon. How could I suffer myself to doubt, even for an instant, that he could see you, and not love?—But my first care shall be to convey you from the castle. Cefario! ho,—Cefario!"

A man now appeared at the door of the staircase, and other steps were heard ascending. Emily uttered a loud shriek, as Morano hurried her across the chamber, and, at the same moment, she heard a noise at the door, that opened upon the corridor. The Count paused an instant, as if his mind was suspended between love and the desire of vengeance; and, in that instant, the door gave way, and Montoni, followed by the old steward and several other persons, burst into the room.

"Draw!" cried Montoni to the Count, who did not pause for a second bidding, but, giving Emily into the hands of the people, that appeared from the staircase, turned fiercely round. "This is thine heart, villain!" said he, as he made a thrust at Montoni with his sword, who parried the blow, and aimed another, while some of the persons, who had followed him into the room, endeavoured to part the combatants, and others rescued Emily from the hands of Morano's servants.

"Was it for this, Count Morano," said Montoni, in a cool sarcastic tone of voice, "that I received you under my roof, and permitted you, though my declared enemy, to remain under it for the night? Was it, that you might repay my hospitality with the treachery of a fiend, and rob me of my niece?"

"Who talks of treachery?" said Morano, in a tone of unrestrained vehemence. "Let him that does, shew an unblushing face of innocence. Montoni, you are a villain! If there is treachery in this affair, look to yourself as the author of it. *If*—do I say? *I* whom you have wronged with unexampled baseness, whom you have injured almost beyond redress! But why do I use words?—Come on, coward, and receive justice at my hands!"

"Coward!" cried Montoni, bursting from the people who held him, and rushing on the Count, when they both retreated into the corridor, where the fight continued so desperately, that none of the spectator's dared approach them, Montoni swearing that the first, who interfered, should fall by his sword.

Jealousy and revenge lent all their fury to Morano, while the superior skill and the temperance of Montoni enabled him to wound his adversary, whom his servants now attempted to seize, but he would not be restrained, and, regardless of his wound, continued to fight. He seemed to be insensible both of pain and loss of blood, and alive only to the energy of his passions. Montoni on the contrary, persevered in the combat, with a fierce, yet weary valour; he received the point of Morano's sword on his arm, but, almost in the same instant, severely wounded and disarmed him. The Count then fell back into the arms of his servant, while Montoni held his sword over him, and bade him ask his life. Morano, sinking under the anguish of his wound, had scarcely replied by a gesture, and by a few words, feebly articulated, that he would not—when he fainted; and Montoni was then going to have plunged the sword into his breast, as he lay senseless, but his arm was arrested by Cavigni. To the interruption he yielded without much difficulty, but his complexion changed almost to blackness, as he looked upon his fallen adversary, and ordered that he should be carried instantly from the castle.

In the mean time, Emily, who had been withheld from leaving the chamber during the affray, now came forward into the corridor, and pleaded a cause of common humanity, with the feelings of the warmest benevolence, when she entreated Montoni to allow Morano the assistance in the castle, which his situation required. But Montoni, who had seldom listened to pity, now seemed rapacious of vengeance, and, with a monster's cruelty, again ordered his defeated enemy to be taken from the castle, in his present state, though there were only the woods, or a solitary neighbouring cottage, to shelter him from the night.

The Count's servants having declared that they would not move him till he revived, Montoni's stood inactive, Cavigni remonstrating, and Emily, superior to Montoni's menaces, giving water to Morano, and directing the attendants to bind up his wound. At length Montoni had leisure to feel pain from his own hurt, and he withdrew to examine it.

The Count, meanwhile, having slowly recovered, the first object he saw, on raising his eyes, was Emily, bending over him

with a countenance strongly expressive of solicitude. He surveyed her with a look of anguish.

"I have deserved this," said he, "but not from Montoni. It is from you, Emily, that I have deserved punishment, yet I receive only pity!" He paused, for he had spoken with difficulty. After a moment he proceeded. "I must resign you, but not to Montoni. Forgive me the sufferings I have already occasioned you! But for *that* villain—his infamy shall not go unpunished. Carry me from this place," said he to his servants. "I am in no condition to travel: you must, therefore, take me to the nearest cottage, for I will not pass the night under his roof, although I may expire on the way from it."

Cesario proposed to go out, and inquire for a cottage, that might receive his master, before he attempted to remove him: but Morano was impatient to be gone; the anguish of his mind seemed to be even greater than that of his wound, and he rejected, with disdain, the offer of Cavigni to entreat Montoni, that he might be suffered to pass the night in the castle. Cesario was now going to call up the carriage to the great gate, but the Count forbade him. "I cannot bear the motion of a carriage," said he: "call some others of my people, that they may assist in bearing me in their arms."

At length, however, Morano submitted to reason and consented, that Cesario should first prepare some cottage to receive him. Emily, now that he had recovered his senses, was about to withdraw from the corridor, when a message came from Montoni commanded her to do so, and also that the Count if he was not already gone, should quit the castle immediately. Indignation flashed from Morano's eyes, and flushed his cheeks.

"Tell Montoni," said he, "that I shall go when it suits my own convenience: that I quit the castle, he dares to call his, as I would the nest of a serpent, and that this is not the last he shall hear from me. Tell him, I will not leave *another* murder on his conscience, if I can help it."

"Count Morano! do you know what you say?" said Cavigni.

"Yes, Signor, I know well what I say, and he will understand well what I mean. His conscience will assist his understanding, on this occasion."

"Count Morano," said Verezzi, who had hitherto silently observed him, "dare again to insult my friend, and I will plunge this sword in your body."

"It would be an action worthy the friend of a villain!" said Morano, as the strong impulse of his indignation enabled him to

raise himself from the arms of his servants ; but the energy was momentary, and he sunk back, exhausted by the effort. Montoni's people, meanwhile, held Verezzi, who seemed inclined, even in this instant, to execute his threat ; and Cavigni, who was not so depraved as to abet the cowardly malignity of Verezzi, endeavoured to withdraw him from the corridor ; and Emily, whom a compassionate interest had thus long detained, was now quitting it in new terror, when the supplicating voice of Morano arrested her, and, by a feeble gesture, he beckoned her to draw nearer. She advanced with timid steps, but the fainting languor of his countenance again awakened her pity, and overcame her terror.

" I am going from hence for ever" said he : " perhaps, I shall never see you again. I would carry with me your forgiveness, Emily, nay more—I would carry your good wishes."

" You have my forgiveness, then," said Emily, " and my sincere wishes for your recovery."

" And only for my recovery ?" said Morano, with a sigh. " For your general welfare," added Emily.

" Perhaps I ought to be contended with this," he resumed ; " I certainly have not deserved more : but I would ask you, Emily, sometimes to think of me, and, forgetting my offence, to remember only the passion which occasioned it. I would ask, alas ! impossibilities : I would ask, you to love me ! At this moment, when I am about to part with you, and that, perhaps, for ever, I am scarcely myself. Emily—may you never know the torture of a passion like mine ! What do I say ? O, that, for me, you might be sensible of such a passion !"

Emily looked impatient to be gone. " I entreat you, Count, to consult your own safety," said she, " and linger here no longer. I tremble for the consequences of Signor Verezzi's passion, and of Montoni's resentment, should he learn that you are still here."

Morano's face was overspread with a momentary crimson, his eyes sparkled, but he seemed endeavouring to conquer his emotion, and replied in a calm voice, " Since you are interested for my safety, I will regard it, and be gone. But, before I go, let me again hear you say, that you wish me well," said he, fixing on her an earnest and mournful look.

Emily repeated her assurances. He took her hand, which she scarcely attempted to withdraw, and put it to his lips. " Farewel, Count Morano !" said Emily ; and she turned to go, when a second message arrived from Montoni, and she again conjured

Morano, as he valued his life, to quit the castle immediately. He regarded her in silence, with a look of fixed despair. But she had no time to enforce her compassionate entreaties, and not daring to disobey the second command of Montoni, she left the corridor to attend him.

He was in the cedar parlour, that adjoined the great hall, laid upon a couch, and suffering a degree of anguish from his wound, which few persons could have disguised, as he did. His countenance, which was stern, but calm, expressed the dark passion of revenge, but no symptom of pain; bodily pain, indeed, he had always despised, and had yielded only to the strong and terrible energies of the soul. He was attended by old Carlo and by Signor Bertolini, but Madame Montoni was not with him.

Emily trembled, as she approached and received his severe rebuke, for not having obeyed his first summons; and perceived, also, that he attributed her stay in the corridor to a motive, that had not even occurred to her artless mind.

"This is an instance of female caprice," said he, "which I ought to have foreseen. Count Morano, whose suit you obstinately rejected, so long as it was countenanced by me, you favour, it seems, since you find I have dismissed him."

Emily looked astonished. "I do not comprehend you, sir," said she: "You certainly do not mean to imply, that the design of the Count to visit the double-chamber, was founded upon any approbation of mine."

"To that I reply nothing," said Montoni; "but it must certainly be a more than common interest, that made you plead so warmly in his cause, and that could detain you thus long in his presence, contrary to my express order—in the presence of a man, whom you have hitherto, on all occasions, most scrupulously shunned!"

"I fear, sir, it was a more than common interest, that detained me," said Emily calmly; "for of late I have been inclined to think, that of compassion is an uncommon one. But how could I, could *you* sir, witness Count Morano's deplorable condition, and not wish to relieve it?"

"You add hypocrisy to caprice," said Montoni, frowning, "and an attempt at satire, to both; but, before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practice the virtues, which are indispensable to a woman—sincerity, uniformity of conduct and obedience."

Emily, who had always endeavoured to regulate her conduct by the nicest laws, and whose mind was finely sensible, not only

of what is just in morals, but of whatever is beautiful in the female character, was shocked by these words; yet, in the next moment, her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise, instead of censure, and she was proudly silent. Montoni, acquainted with the delicacy of her mind, knew how keenly she would feel his rebuke; but he was a stranger to the luxury of conscious worth, and, therefore, did not foresee the energy of that sentiment, which now repelled his satire. Turning to a servant who had lately entered the room, he asked whether Morano had quitted the castle. The man answered, that his servants were then removing him, on a couch, to a neighbouring cottage. Montoni seemed somewhat appeased, on hearing this; and, when Ludovico appeared, a few moments after, and said, that Morano was gone, he told Emily she might retire to her apartment.

She withdrew willingly from his presence; but the thought of passing the remainder of the night in a chamber, which the door from the staircase made liable to the intrusion of any person, now alarmed her more than ever, and she determined to call at Madame Montoni's room, and request, that Annette might be permitted to be with her.

On reaching the great gallery, she heard voices seemingly in dispute, and, her spirits now apt to take alarm, she paused, but soon distinguished some words of Cavigni and Verezzi, and went towards them, in the hope of conciliating their difference. They were alone. Verezzi's face was still flushed with rage; and, as the first object of it was now removed from him, he appeared willing to transfer his resentment to Cavigni, who seemed to be expostulating, rather than disputing, with him.

Verezzi was protesting, that he would instantly inform Montoni of the insult, which Morano had thrown out against him, and above all, that, wherein he had accused him of murder.

"There is no answering," said Cavigni, "for the words of a man in a passion; little serious regard ought to be paid to them. If you persist in your resolution, the consequences may be fatal to both. We have now more serious interests to pursue, than those of a petty revenge."

Emily joined her entreaties to Cavigni's arguments, and they, at length, prevailed so far, as that Verezzi consented to retire, without seeing Montoni.

On calling at her aunt's apartment, she found it fastened. In a few minutes, however, it was opened by Madame Montoni herself.

It may be remembered, that it was by a door leading into the bed room from a back passage, that Emily had secretly entered a few hours preceding. She now conjectured, by the calmness of Madame Montoni's air, that she was not apprised of the accident, which had befallen her husband, and was beginning to inform her of it, in the tenderest manner she could, when her aunt interrupted her, by saying she was acquainted with the whole affair.

Emily knew indeed, that she had little reason to love Montoni, but could scarcely have believed her capable of such perfect apathy, as she now discovered towards him; having obtained permission, however, for Annette to sleep in her chamber, she went thither immediately.

A track of blood appeared along the corridor, leading to it; and on the spot, where the Count and Montoni had fought, the whole floor was stained. Emily shuddered, and leaned on Annette, as she passed. When she reached her apartment, she instantly determined, since the door of the staircase had been left open, and that Annette was now with her, to explore whither it led,—a circumstance now materially connected with her own safety.—Annette accordingly, half curious and half afraid, proposed to descend the stairs; but on approaching the door, they perceived that it was already fastened without, and their care was then directed to the securing it on the inside also, by placing against it as much of the heavy furniture of the room, as they could lift. Emily then retired to bed, and Annette continued on a chair by the hearth, where some feeble embers remained.

C H A P. XXI.

“Of aery tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.”

MILTON.

IT is now necessary to mention some circumstances, which could not be related amidst the events of Emily's hasty departure from Venice, or together with those, which so rapidly succeeded to her arrival in the castle.

On the morning of her journey, Count Morano had gone at the appointed hour to the mansion of Monteri, to demand his bride. When he reached it, he was somewhat surprised by the

silence and solitary air of the portico, where Montoni's lacquey's usually loitered ; but surprise was soon changed to astonishment, and astonishment to the rage of disappointment, when the door was opened by an old woman, who told his servants, that her master and his family had left Venice, early in the morning, for *Terraferma*. Scarcely believing what his servants told, he left his gondola, and rushed into the hall to inquire further. The old woman, who was the only person left in care of the mansion, persisted in her story, which the silent and deserted apartments soon convinced him was no fiction. He then seized her with a menacing air, as if he meant to wreak all his vengeance upon her, at the same time asking her twenty questions in a breath, and all these with a gesticulation so furious, that she was deprived of the power of answering them ; then suddenly letting her go, he stamped about the hall, like a madman, cursing Montoni and his own folly.

When the good woman was at liberty, and had somewhat recovered from her fright, she told him all she knew of the affair, which, was, indeed, very little, but enough to enable Morano to discover, that Montoni was gone to his castle on the Appennine. Thither he followed as soon as his servants could complete the necessary preparation for the journey, accompanied by a friend, and attended by a number of his people, determined to obtain Emily or a full revenge on Montoni. When his mind had recovered from the first effervescence of rage, and his thoughts became less obscured, his conscience hinted to him certain circumstances, which, in some measure, explained the conduct of Montoni : but how the latter could have been led to suspect an intention, which, he had believed, was known only to himself, he could not even guess. On this occasion, however, he had been partly betrayed by that sympathetic intelligence, which may be said to exist between bad minds, and which teaches one man to judge what another will do in the same circumstances. Thus it was with Montoni, who had now received indisputable proof of a truth, which he had sometime suspected—that Morano's circumstances, instead of being affluent, as he had been bidden to believe, were greatly involved. Montoni had been interested in his suit, by motives entirely selfish, those of avarice and pride ; the last of which would have been gratified by an alliance with a Venetian nobleman, the former by Emily's estate in Gascony, which he had stipulated, as the price of his favour, should be delivered up to him from the day of her marriage.—In the meantime, he had been led to suspect, the consequence of

the Count's boundless extravagance ; but it was not till the evening, preceding the intended nuptials, that he obtained certain information of his distressed circumstances. He did not hesitate then to infer, that Morano designed to defraud him of Emily's estate ; and in this supposition he was confirmed, and with apparent reason, by the subsequent conduct of the Count, who, after having appointed to meet him on that night, for the purpose of signing the instrument, which was to secure to him his reward, failed in his engagement. Such a circumstance, indeed, in a man of Morano's gay and thoughtless character, and at a time when his mind was engaged by the bustle of preparation for his nuptials, might have been attributed to a cause less decisive, than design ; but Montoni did not hesitate an instant to interpret in his own way, and after vainly waiting the Count's arrival, for several hours, he gave orders for his people to be in readiness to set off at a moment's notice. By hastening to Udolpho he intended to remove Emily from the reach of Morano, as well as to break off the affair, without submitting himself to useless altercation : and, if the Count meant what he called honourably, he would doubtless follow Emily, and sign the writings in question. If this was done, so little consideration had Montoni for her welfare, that he would not have scrupled to sacrifice her to a man of ruined fortune, since by that means he could enrich himself ; and he forebore to mention to her the motive of his sudden journey lest the hope it might revive should render her more intractable, when submission would be required.

With these considerations, he had left Venice ; and, with others totally different, Morano had, soon after, pursued his steps across the rugged Apennines. When his arrival was announced at the castle, Montoni did not believe, that he would have presumed to shew himself, unless he had meant to fulfil his engagement, and he, therefore, readily admitted him ; but the enraged countenance and expressions of Morano, as he entered the apartment, instantly undeceived him ; and, when Montoni had explained, in part, the motives of his abrupt departure from Venice, the Count still persisted in demanding Emily, and reproaching Montoni, without even naming the former stipulation.

Montoni, at length, weary of the dispute, deferred the settling of it till the morrow, and Morano retired with some hope, suggested by Montoni's apparent indecision. When, however, in the silence of his own apartment, he began to consider the past conversation, the character of Montoni, and some former instances of his duplicity, the hope, which he had admitted, van-

ished, and he determined not to neglect the present possibility of obtaining Emily by other means. To his confidential valet he told his design of carrying away Emily, and sent him back to Montoni's servants to find out one among them, who might enable him to execute it. The choice of this person he entrusted to the fellow's own discernment, and not imprudently; for he discovered a man, whom Montoni had, on some former occasion, treated harshly, and who was now ready to betray him. This man conducted Cefario round the castle, through a private passage, to the staircase, that led to Emily's chamber; then shewed him a short way out of the building, and afterwards procured him the keys, that would secure his retreat. The man was well rewarded for his trouble; how the Count was rewarded for his treachery has already appeared.

Meanwhile, old Carlo had overheard two of Morano's servants, who had been ordered to be in waiting with the carriage, beyond the castle walls, expressing their surprise at their master's sudden, and secret departure, for the valet had entrusted them with no more of Morano's designs, than it was necessary for them to execute. They, however, indulged themselves in surmises, and in expressing them to each other; and from these Carlo had drawn a just conclusion. But, before he ventured to disclose his apprehensions to Montoni, he endeavoured to obtain further confirmation of them, and, for this purpose, placed himself, with one of his fellow servants, at the door of Emily's apartment, that opened upon the corridor. He did not watch long in vain, though the growling of the dog had once nearly betrayed him. When he was convinced, that Morano was in the room, and had listened long enough to his conversation, to understand his scheme, he immediately alarmed Montoni, and thus rescued Emily from the designs of the Count.

Montoni, on the following morning, appeared as usual, except that he wore his wounded arm in a sling; he went out upon the ramparts; overlooked the men employed in repairing them; gave orders for additional workmen, and then came into the castle to give audience to several persons, who were just arrived, and who were shewn into a private apartment, where he communicated with them, for near an hour. Carlo was then summoned, and ordered to conduct the strangers to a part of the castle, which, in former times, had been occupied by the upper servants of the family, and to provide them with every necessary refreshment.—When he had done this, he was bidden to return to his master.

Meanwhile, the Count remained in a cottage in the skirts of the woods below, suffering under bodily and mental pain, and meditating deep revenge against Montoni. His servant, whom he had dispatched for a surgeon to the nearest town, which was, however, at a considerable distance, did not return till the following day, when, his wounds being examined and dressed, the practitioner refused to deliver any positive opinion, concerning the degree of danger attending them; but, giving his patient a composing draught and ordering him to be kept quiet, remained at the cottage to watch the event.

Emily, for the remainder of the late eventful night, had been suffered to sleep, undisturbed; and, when her mind recovered from the confusion of slumber, and she remembered, that she was now released from the addresses of Count Morano, her spirits were suddenly relieved from a part of the terrible anxiety, that had long oppressed them; that which remained, arose chiefly from a recollection of Morano's assertions, concerning the schemes of Montoni. He had said, that plans of the latter, concerning Emily, were inscarchable, yet that he knew them to be terrible. At the time he uttered this, she almost believed it to be designed for the purpose of prevailing with her to throw herself into his protection, and she still thought it might be chiefly so accounted for; but his assertions had left an impression on her mind, which a consideration of that character and former conduct of Montoni did not contribute to efface. She, however, checked her propensity to anticipate evil; and, determined to enjoy this respite from actual misfortune, tried to dismiss thought, took her instruments for drawing, and placed herself at a window, to select into a landscape some features of the scenery without.

As she was thus employed, she saw, walking on the rampart below, the men, who had so lately arrived at the castle. The sight of strangers surprised her, but still more, of strangers such as these. There was a singularity in their dress, and a certain fierceness in their air, that fixed all her attention. She withdrew from the casement, while they passed, but soon returned to observe them further. Their figures seemed so well suited to the wildness of the surrounding objects, that, as they stood surveying the castle, she sketched them for bantitti, amid the mountain view of her picture, when she had finished which, she was surprised to observe the spirit of her group. But she had copied from nature.

Carlo, when he had placed refreshment before these men in the apartment assigned to them, returned, as he was ordered, to Mon-

toni, who was anxious to discover by what servant the keys of the castle had been delivered to Morano, on the preceding night. But this man, though he was too faithful to his master quietly to see him injured, would not betray a fellow servant even to justice; he, therefore pretended to be ignorant who it was, that had conspired with Count Morano, and related, as before, that he had only overheard some of the strangers describing the plot.

Montoni's suspicions naturally fell upon the porter, whom he ordered now to attend. Carlo hesitated, and then with slow steps went to seek him.

Barnardine, the porter, denied the accusation with a countenance so steady and undaunted, that Montoni could scarcely believe him guilty, though he knew not how to think him innocent. At length, the man was dismissed from his presence, and, though the real offender, escaped detection.

Montoni then went to his wife's apartment, whither Emily followed soon after, but, finding them in high dispute, was instantly leaving the room, when her aunt called her back, and desired her to stay.—“You shall be a witness,” said she, “of my opposition. Now, sir, repeat the command, I have so often refused to obey.”

Montoni turned, with a stern countenance, to Emily, and bade her quit the apartment, while his wife persisted in desiring, that she would stay. Emily was eager to escape from this scene of contention, and anxious, also, to serve her aunt; but she despaired of conciliating Montoni, in whose eyes the rising tempest of his soul flashed terribly.

“Leave the room,” said he, in a voice of thunder. Emily obeyed, and, walking down to the rampart, which the strangers had now left, continued to meditate on the unhappy marriage of her father's sister, and on her own desolate situation, occasioned by the ridiculous imprudence of her, whom she had always wished to respect and love. Madame Montoni's conduct had, indeed, rendered it impossible for Emily to do either; but her gentle heart was touched by her distress, and, in the pity thus awakened, she forgot the injurious treatment she had received from her.

As she sauntered on the rampart, Annette appeared at the hall door, looked cautiously round, and then advanced to meet her.

“Dear ma'amfelle, I have been looking for you all over the castle,” said she. “If you will step this way, I will shew you a picture.”

“A picture!” exclaimed Emily, and shuddered.

"Yes, ma'am, a picture of the late lady of this place: Old Carlo just now told me it was her, and I thought you would be curious to see it. As to my lady, you know, ma'amfelle, one cannot talk about such things to her."—

"And so," said Emily smiling, "as you must talk of them to somebody—"

"Why, yes, ma'amfelle; what can one do in such a place as this, if one must not talk? If I was in a dungeon, if they would let me talk—it would be some comfort; nay, I would talk, if it was only to the walls. But come, ma'amfelle, we lose time—let me shew you to the picture."

"Is it veiled?" said Emily, pausing.

"Dear ma'amfelle!" said Annette, fixing her eyes on Emily's face, "what makes you look so pale?—are you ill?"

"No, Annette, I am well enough, but I have no desire to see this picture; return into the hall."

"What! ma'am not to see the lady of this castle?" said the girl—"the lady, who disappeared so strangely? Well! now, I would have run to the furthest mountain we can see, yonder, to have got a sight of such a picture; and, to speak my mind, that strange story is all, that makes me care about this old castle, though it makes me thrill all over, as it were, whenever I think of it."

"Yes, Annette, you love the wonderful; but do you know, that, unless you guard against this inclination, it will lead you into all the misery of superstition?"

Annette might have smiled in her turn, at this sage observation of Emily, who could tremble with ideal terrors, as much as herself, and listen almost as eagerly to the recital of a mysterious story. Annette urged her request.

"Are you sure it is a picture?" said Emily, "Have you seen it?—Is it veiled?"

"Holy Maria! ma'amfelle, yes, no, yes. I am sure it is a picture—I have seen it and it is not veiled!"

The tone and look of surprise, with which this was uttered, recalled Emily's prudence; who concealed her emotion under a smile, and bade Annette lead her to the picture. It was in an obscure chamber, adjoining that part of the castle, allotted to the servants. Several other portraits hung on the walls, covered, like this, with dust and cobweb.

"That is it ma'amfelle," said Annette, in a low voice, and pointing. Emily advanced, and surveyed the picture. It represented a lady in the flower of youth and beauty; her features were handsome and noble, full of strong expression, but had little of the captivating sweetness, that Emily had looked for,

and still less of the pensive mildness she loved. It was a countenance, which spoke the language of passion, rather than that of sentiment; a haughty impatience of misfortune—not the placid melancholy of a spirit injured, yet resigned.

“How many years have passed, since this lady disappeared, Annette?” said Emily.

“Twenty years, ma’amfelle, or thereabout, as they tell me; I know it is a long while ago.” Emily continued to gaze upon the portrait.

“I think,” resumed Annette, “the Signor would do well to hang it in a better place, than this old chamber. Now, in my mind, he ought to place the picture of a lady, who gave him all these riches, in the handsomest room in the castle. But he may have good reasons for what he does: and some people do say, that he has lost his riches, as well as his gratitude. But hush, ma’am, not a word!” added Annette, laying her finger on her lips. Emily was too much absorbed in thought, to hear what she said.

“’Tis a handsome lady, I am sure,” continued Annette: “the Signor need not be ashamed to put her in the great apartment where the veiled picture hangs.” Emily turned round. “But for that matter, she would be as little seen there, as here, for the door is always locked, I find.”

“Let us leave this chamber,” said Emily: “and let me caution you again, Annette; be guarded in your conversation, and never tell, that you know any thing of that picture.”

“Holy mother exclaimed Annette, “it is no secret; why all the servants have seen it already!”

Emily started. “How is this?” said she—“Have seen it! When? how?”

“Dear, ma’amfelle, there is nothing surprising in that; we had all a little more *curiousness* than you had.”

“I thought you told me, the door was kept locked?” said Emily.

“If that was the case, ma’amfelle,” replied Annette, looking about her, “how could we get here?”

“O! you mean *this* picture,” said Emily, with returning calmness. “Well, Annette, here is nothing more to engage my attention; we will go.”

Emily, as she passed to her own apartment, saw Montoni go down to the hall, and she turned into her aunt’s dressing room, whom she found weeping and alone, grief and resentment struggling on her countenance. Pride had hitherto restrained com-

plaint. Judging of Emily's disposition from her own, and from a consciousness of what her treatment of her deserved, she had believed, that her griefs would be cause of triumph to her niece, rather than of sympathy; that she would despise, not pity her. But she knew not the tenderness and benevolence of Emily's heart, that had always taught her to forget her own injuries in the misfortunes of her enemy. The sufferings of others, whoever they might be, called forth her ready compassion, which dissipated at once every obscuring cloud to goodness, that passion or prejudice might have raised in her mind.

Madame Montoni's sufferings, at length, rose above her pride, and when Emily had before entered the room, she would have told them all, had not her husband prevented her; now that she was no longer restrained by his presence, she poured forth all her complaints to her niece.

"O Emily!" she exclaimed, "I am the most wretched of women—I am indeed cruelly treated! Who, with my prospects of happiness could have foreseen such a wretched fate as this?—who could have thought, when I married such a man as the Signor, I should ever have to bewail my lot? But there is no judging what is for the best—there is no knowing what is for our good! The most flattering prospects often change—the best judgments may be deceived—who could have foreseen, when I married the Signor, that I should ever repent my *generosity*?"

Emily thought she might have foreseen it, but this was not a thought of triumph. She placed herself in a chair near her aunt, took her hand, and with one of those looks of soft compassion, which might characterize the countenance of a guardian angel, spoke to her in the tenderest accents. But these did not sooth Madame Montoni, whom impatience to talk made unwilling to listen. She wanted to complain, not to be consoled; and it was by exclamations of complaint only, that Emily learned the particular circumstances of her affliction.

"Ungrateful man!" said Madame Montoni, "he has deceived me in every respect; and now he has taken me from my country and friends, to shut me up in this old castle; and, here he thinks he can compel me to do whatever he designs! But he shall find himself mistaken, he shall find that no threats can alter—But who would have believed? who would have supposed, that a man of his family and apparent wealth had absolutely no fortune?—no, scarcely a sequin of his own! I did all for the best; I thought he was a man of consequence, of great property, or I am sure I would never have married him,—ungrateful, artful man!" She paused to take breath,

"Dear Madam, be composed," said Emily; "the Signor may not be so rich as you had reason to expect, but surely he cannot be very poor, since this castle and the mansion at Venice are his. May I ask what are the circumstances, that particularly affect you?"

"What are the circumstances?" exclaimed Madame Montoni with resentment: "why is it not sufficient, that he had long ago ruined his own fortune by play, and that he has since lost what I brought him—and that now he would compel me to sign away my settlement (it was well I had the chief of my property settled on myself!) that he may lose this also, or throw it away in wild schemes, which nobody can understand but himself? And, and——is not all this sufficient?"

"It is, indeed," said Emily, "but you must recollect, dear madam, that I knew nothing of all this."

"Well, and is it not sufficient," rejoined her aunt, "that he is also absolutely ruined, that he is sunk deeply in debt, and that neither this castle, or the mansion at Venice, is his own, if all his debts, honourable and dishonourable, were paid!"

"I am shocked by what you tell me, madam," said Emily.

"And is it not enough," interrupted Madame Montoni, "that he has treated me with neglect, with cruelty, because I refused to relinquish my settlements, and, instead of being frightened by his menaces, resolutely defied him, and upbraided him with his shameful conduct? But I bore all meekly,—you know, niece, I never uttered a word of complaint, till now; no! That such a disposition as mine should be so imposed upon! That I, whose only faults are too much kindness, too much generosity, should be chained for life to such a vile, deceitful, cruel monster!"

Want of breath compelled Madame Montoni to stop. If any thing could have made Emily smile in these moments, it would have been this speech of her aunt, delivered in a voice very little below a scream, and with a vehemence of gesticulation and of countenance, that turned the whole into burlesque. Emily saw, that her misfortunes did not admit of real consolation, and condemning the common place terms of superficial comfort, she was silent; while Madame Montoni, jealous of her own consequence, mistook this for the silence of insifference, or of contempt, and reproached her with want of duty and feeling.

"O! I suspected what all this boasted sensibility would prove to be!" rejoined she; "I thought it would not teach you to feel either duty, or affection, for your relations, who have treated you like their own daughter!"

"Pardon me, madam," said Emily mildly, "it is not natural to me to boast, and if it was, I am sure I would not boast of sensibility—a quality, perhaps, more to be feared, than desired."

"Well, well, niece, I will not dispute with you. But, as I said, Montoni threatens me with violence, if I any longer refuse to sign away my settlements, and this was the subject of our contest, when you came into the room before. Now, I am determined no power on earth shall make me do this. Neither will I bear all this tamely. He shall hear his true character from me; I will tell him all he deserves, in spite of his threats and cruel treatment."

Emily seized a pause of Madame Montoni's voice, to speak. "Dear madam," said she, "but will not this serve to irritate the Signor unnecessarily? will it not provoke the harsh treatment you dread?"

"I do not care," replied Madame Montoni, "it does not signify: I will not submit to such usage. You would have me give up my settlements, too, I suppose!"

"No, madam, I do not exactly mean that."

"What is it you do mean then?"

"You spoke of reproaching the Signor,"—said Emily, with hesitation. "Why, does he not deserve reproaches?" said her aunt.

Certainly he does; but will it be prudent in you, madam, to make them?"

"Prudent!" exclaimed Madame Montoni. "Is this a time to talk of prudence, when one is threatened with all sorts of violence?"

"It is to avoid that violence, that prudence is necessary," said Emily.

"Of prudence!" continued Madame Montoni, without attending to her, "of prudence towards a man, who does not scruple to break all the common ties of humanity in his conduct to me! And is it for me to consider prudence in my behaviour towards him! I am not so mean."

"It is for your own sake, not for the Signor's madam," said Emily modestly, "that you should consult prudence. Your reproaches, however just, cannot punish him, but they may provoke him to further violence against you."

"What! would you have me submit, then, to whatever he commands—would you have me kneel down at his feet and thank him for his cruelties? Would you have me give up my settlements?"

"How much you mistake me, madam!" said Emily, "I am unequal to advise you on a point so important as the last: but you will pardon me for saying, that, if you consult your own peace, you will try to conciliate Signor Montoni, rather than to irritate him by reproaches."

"Conciliate indeed! I tell you, niece, it is utterly impossible; I disdain to attempt it."

Emily was shocked to observe the perverted understanding and obstinate temper of Madame Montoni; but, not less grieved for her sufferings, she looked round for some alleviating circumstance to offer her. "Your situation is, perhaps, not so desperate, dear madam," said Emily, "as you may imagine. The Signor may represent his affairs to be worse than they are, for the purpose of pleading a stronger necessity for his possession of your settlement. Besides, so long as you keep this, you may look forward to it as a resource, at least, that will afford you a competence, should the Signor's future conduct compel you to sue for separation."

Madame Montoni impatiently interrupted her. "Unfeeling, cruel girl!" said she, "and so you would persuade me, that I have no reason to complain; that the Signor is in very flourishing circumstances, that my future prospects promise nothing but comfort, and that my griefs are as fanciful and romantic as your own! is it the way to console me, to endeavour to persuade me out of my senses and my feelings, because you happen to have no feelings yourself? I thought I was opening my heart to a person, who could sympathize in my distress, but I find, that your people of sensibility can feel for nobody but themselves! you may retire to your chamber."

Emily, without replying, immediately left the room, with a mingled emotion of pity and contempt, and hastened to her own, where she yielded to the mournful reflections, which a knowledge of her aunt's situation had occasioned. The conversation of the Italian with Valancourt, in France, again occurred to her. His hints, respecting the broken fortunes of Montoni, were now completely justified; those, also, concerning his character, appeared not less so, though the particular circumstances, connected with his fame, to which the stranger had alluded, yet remained to be explained. Notwithstanding, that her own observations and the words of Count Morano had convinced her, that Montoni's situation was not what it formerly appeared to be, the intelligence she had just received from her aunt on this point struck her with all the force of astonishment, which was

not weakened, when she considered the present style of Montoni's living, the number of servants he maintained, and the new expenses he was incurring, by repairing and fortifying his castle.— Her anxiety for her aunt and for herself increased with reflection. Several assertions of Morano, which, on the preceding night, she had believed were prompted either by interest, or by resentment, now returned to her mind with the strength of truth. She could not doubt, that Montoni had formerly agreed to give her to the Count, for a pecuniary reward; his character, and his distressed circumstances justified the belief; these, also, seemed to confirm Morano's assertion, that he now designed to dispose of her, more advantageously for himself, to a richer suitor.

Amidst the reproaches, which Morano had thrown out against Montoni, he had said—he would not quit the castle *he dared to call his*, nor willingly leave *another* murder on his conscience—hints, which might have no other origin than the passion of the moment: but Emily was now inclined to account for them more seriously, and she shuddered to think, that she was in the hands of a man, to whom it was even possible they could apply. At length, considering, that reflection could neither release her from her melancholy situation, or enable her to bear it with greater fortitude, she tried to divert her anxiety, and took down from her little library a volume of her favourite Ariosto; but his wild imagery and rich invention could not long enchant her attention; his spells did not reach her heart, and over her sleeping fancy they played, without awakening it.

She now put aside the book, and took her lute, for it was seldom that her sufferings refused to yield to the magic of sweet sounds; when they did so, she was oppressed by sorrow, that came from excess of tenderness and regret; and there were times, when music had increased such sorrow to a degree, that was scarcely endurable; when, if it had not suddenly ceased, she might have lost her reason. Such was the time, when she mourned for her father, and heard the midnight strains, that floated by her window near the convent in Languedoc, on the night that followed his death.

She continued to play, till Annette brought dinner into her chamber, at which Emily was surprised, and inquired whose order she obeyed. “My lady’s, ma’amfelle,” replied Annette: “the Signor ordered her dinner to be carried to her own apartment, and so she has sent you yours. There have been sad doings between them, worse than ever, I think.”

Emily, not appearing to notice what she said, sat down to the little table, that was spread for her. But Annette was not to be

silenced thus easily. While she waited, she told of the arrival of the men, whom Emily had observed on the ramparts, and expressed much surprise at their strange appearance, as well as at the manner, in which they had been attended by Montoni's order. "Do they dine with the Signor, then?" said Emily.

"No, ma'amfelle, they dined long ago, in an apartment at the north end of the castle, but I know not when they are to go, for the Signor told old Carlo to see them provided with every thing necessary. They have been walking all about the castle, and asking questions of the workmen on the ramparts. I never saw such strange looking men in my life; I am frightened whenever I see them."

Emily inquired, if she had heard of Count Morano, and whether he was likely to recover: but Annette only knew, that he was lodged in a cottage in the wood below, and that every body said he must die. Emily's countenance discovered her emotion.

"Dear ma'amfelle," said Annette, "to see how young ladies will disguise themselves, when they are in love! I thought you hated the Count, or I am sure I would not have told you; and I am sure you have cause enough to hate him."

"I hope I hate nobody," replied Emily, trying to smile; "but certainly I do not love Count Morano. I should be shocked to hear of any person dying by violent means."

"Yes, ma'amfelle, but it is his own fault."

Emily looked displeased; and Annette, mistaking the cause of her displeasure, immediately began to excuse the Count, in her way. "To be sure, it was very ungenteele behaviour," said she, "to break into a lady's room, and then, when he found his discoursing was not agreeable to her, to refuse to go; and then, when the gentleman of the castle comes to desire him to walk about his business,—to turn round, and draw his sword, and swear he'll run him through the body!—To be sure it was very ungenteele behaviour, but then he was disguised in love, and so did not know what he was about."

"Enough of this," said Emily, who now smiled without an effort; and Annette returned to a mention of the disagreement between Montoni and his lady. "It is nothing new," said she: "we saw and heard enough of this at Venice though I never told you of it, ma'amfelle."

"Well, Annette, it was very prudent of you not to mention it then: be as prudent now; the subject is an unpleasant one."

"Ah dear, ma'amfelle!—to see now how considerate you can be about some folks, who care so little about you! I cannot bear

to see you so deceived, and I must tell you. But it is all for your own good, and not to spite my lady, though, to speak truth, I have little reason to love her ; but—”

“ You are not speaking thus of my aunt, I hope, Annette ?” said Emily, gravely.

“ Yes, ma’amfelle, but I am, though ; and if you knew as much as I do, you would not look so angry. I have often and often, heard the Signor and her talking over your marriage with the Count, and she always advised him never to give up to your foolish whims, as she was pleased to call them, but to be resolute, and compel you to be obedient, whether you would or no. And I am sure, my heart has ached a thousand times, and I have thought, when she was so unhappy herself, she might have felt a little for other people, and——”

“ I thank you for your pity, Annette,” said Emily, interrupting her : “ but my aunt was unhappy then, and that disturbed her temper perhaps, or I think—I am sure—— You may take away, Annette, I have done.”

“ Dear, ma’amfelle, you have eat nothing at all ! Do try, and take a little bit more. Disturbed her temper truly ! why, her temper is always disturbed, I think. And at Tholouse too I have heard my lady talking of you and Monf. Valancourt to Madame Merveille and Madame Vaïson, often and often, in a very ill-natured way, as I thought, telling them what a deal of trouble she had to keep you in order, and what a fatigue and distress it was to her, and that she believed you would run away with Monf. Valancourt, if she was not to watch you closely ; and that you connived at his coming about the house at night, and”——

“ Good God !” exclaimed Emily, blushing deeply, “ it is surely impossible my aunt could thus have represented me !”

“ Indeed, ma’am, I say nothing more than the truth, and not all of that. But I thought, myself, she might have found something better to discourse about, than the faults of her own niece, even if you had been in fault, ma’amfelle ; but I did not believe a word of what she said. But my lady does not care what she says against any body, for that matter.”

“ However that may be, Annette,” interrupted Emily, recovering her composure, “ it does not become you to speak of the faults of my aunt to me. I know you have meant well, but—say no more.—I have quite dined.”

Annette blushed, looked down, and then began slowly to clear the table.

"Is this, then, the reward of my ingenuousness?" said Emily, when she was alone; "the treatment I am to receive from a relation—an aunt—who ought to have been the guardian, not the slanderer of my reputation,—who, as a woman, ought to have respected the delicacy of female honour, and, as a relation, should have protected mine! But, to utter falsehoods on so nice a subject—to repay the openness, and, I may say with honest pride, the propriety of my conduct, with slanders—required a depravity of heart, such as I could scarcely have believed existed, such as I weep to find in a relation. O! what a contrast does her character present to that of my beloved father; while envy and low cunning form the chief traits of hers, his was distinguished by benevolence and philosophic wisdom! But now, let me only remember, if possible, that she is unfortunate."

Emily threw her veil over her, and went down to walk upon the ramparts, the only walk, indeed which was open to her, though she often wished, that she might be permitted to ramble among the woods below, and still more, that she might sometimes explore the sublime scenes of the surrounding country. But, as Montoni would not suffer her to pass the gates of the castle, she tried to be contented with the romantic views she beheld from the walls. The peasants, who had been employed on the fortifications, had left their work, and the ramparts were silent and solitary. Their lonely appearance, together with the gloom of a lowering sky, assisted the musings of her mind, and threw over it a kind of melancholy tranquillity, such as she often loved to indulge. She turned to observe a fine effect of the sun, as his rays, suddenly streaming from behind a heavy cloud, lighted up the west towers of the castle, while the rest of the edifice was in deep shade, except, that, through a lofty gothic arch, adjoining the tower, which led to another terrace, the beams darted in full splendour, and shewed the three strangers she had observed in the morning. Perceiving them, she started, and a momentary fear came over her, as she looked up the long rampart, and saw no other persons. While she hesitated, they approached. The gate at the end of the terrace, whither they were advancing, she knew, was always locked, and she could not depart by the opposite extremity, without meeting them; but, before she passed them, she hastily drew a thin veil over her face, which did, indeed, but ill conceal her beauty. They looked earnestly at her, and spoke to each other in bad Italian, of which she caught only a few words; but the fierceness of their countenances, now that she was near enough to discriminate them, struck her yet more

than the wild singularity of their air and dress had formerly done. It was the countenance and figure of him, who walked between the other two, that chiefly seized her attention, which expressed a sullen haughtiness and a kind of dark watchful villainy, that gave a thrill of horror to her heart. All this was so legibly written on his features, as to be seen by a single glance, for she passed the group swiftly, and her timid eyes scarcely rested on them a moment. Having reached the terrace, she stopped, and perceived the strangers standing in the shadow of one of the turrets, gazing after her, and seemingly, by their action, in earnest conversation. She immediately left the rampart, and retired to her apartment.

In the evening, Montoni sat late, carousing with his guests in the cedar chamber. His recent triumph over Count Morano, or, perhaps, some other circumstance, contributed to elevate his spirits to an unusual height. He filled the goblet often, and gave a loose to merriment and talk. The gaiety of Cavigni, on the contrary, was somewhat clouded by anxiety. He kept a watchful eye upon Verezzi, whom, with the utmost difficulty, he had hitherto restrained from exasperating Montoni further against Morano, by a mention of his late taunting words.

One of the company exultingly recurred to the event of the preceding evening. Verezzi's eyes sparkled. The mention of Morano led to that of Emily, of whom they were all profuse in the praise, except Montoni, who sat silent, and then interrupted the subject.

When the servants had withdrawn, Montoni and his friends entered into close conversation, which was sometimes checked by the irascible temper of Verezzi, but in which Montoni displayed his conscious superiority, by that decisive look and manner which always accompanied the vigour of his thought, and to which most of his companions submitted, as to a power, that they had no right to question, though of each other's self importance they were jealously scrupulous. Amidst this conversation, one of them imprudently introduced again the name of Morano; and Verezzi, now more heated by wine, disregarded the expressive looks of Cavigni, and gave some dark hints of what had passed on the preceding night. These, however, Montoni did not appear to understand, for he continued silent in his chair, without discovering any emotion, while, the choler of Verezzi increasing with the apparent insensibility of Montoni, he at length told the suggestion of Morano, that this castle did not lawfully belong to him, and that he would not willingly leave another murder on his conscience,

"Am I to be insulted at my own table, and by my own friends?" said Montoni, with a countenance pale in anger. "Why are the words of that madman repeated to me?" Verezzi who had expected to hear Montoni's indignation poured forth against Morano, and answered by thanks to himself, looked with astonishment at Cavigni, who enjoyed his confusion. "Can you be weak enough to credit the assertions of a madman?" rejoined Montoni, or, what is the same thing, a man possessed by the spirit of vengeance? But he has succeeded too well; you believe what he said."

"Signor," said Verezzi, "we believe only what we know."—"How!" interrupted Montoni, sternly: produce your proof."

"We believe only what we know," repeated Verezzi, "and we know nothing of what Morano asserts." Montoni seemed to recover himself. "I am hasty, my friends," said he, "with respect to my honour; no man shall question it with impunity, you did not mean to question it. These foolish words are not worth your remembrance, or my resentment. Verezzi, here is to your first exploit."

"Success to your first exploit," re-echoed the whole company.

"Noble Signor," replied Verezzi, glad to find he had escaped Montoni's resentment, "with my good will, you should build your ramparts of gold."

"Pass the goblet," cried Montoni. "We will drink to Signora St. Aubert," said Cavigni. "By your leave, we will first drink to the lady of the castle," said Bertolini—Montoni was silent. "To the lady of the castle," said his guests. He bowed his head.

"It much surprises me, Signor," said Bertolini, "that you have so long neglected this castle; it is a noble edifice."

"It suits our purpose," replied Montoni, "and is a noble edifice. You know not, it seems, by what mischance it came to me."

"It was a lucky mischance, be it what it may, Signor," replied Bertolini, smiling. "I would, that one so lucky had befallen me."

Montoni looked gravely at him. "If you will attend to what I say," he resumed, "you shall hear the story."

The countenances of Bertolini and Verezzi expressed something more than curiosity; Cavigni, who seemed to feel none, had probably heard the relation before.

"It is now near twenty years," said Montoni, "since this castle came into my possession. I inherit it by the female line. The lady, my predecessor, was only distantly related to me; I am the last of her family. She was beautiful and rich; I wooed her;

but her heart was fixed upon another, and she rejected me. It is probable, however, that she was herself rejected of the person, whoever he might be, on whom she bestowed her favour, for a deep and settled melancholy took possession of her ; and I have reason to believe she put a period to her own life. I was not at the castle at the time ; but, as there are some singular and mysterious circumstances attending that event. I shall repeat them."

"Repeat them !" said a voice.

Montoni was silent ; the guests looked at each other, to know who spoke ; but they perceived, that each was making the same inquiry. Montoni, at length, recovering himself, "We are overheard," said he : "we will finish this subject another time. Pass the goblet."

The cavaliers looked round the wide chamber.

"Here is no person, but ourselves," said Verezzi : "pray, Signor, proceed."

"Did you hear any thing ?" said Montoni.

"We did," said Bertolini.

"It could be only fancy," said Verezzi, looking round again.

"We see no person besides ourselves ; and the sound I thought I heard seemed within the room. Pray, Signor, go on."

Montoni paused a moment, and then proceeded in a lowered voice, while the cavaliers drew nearer to attend.

"Ye are to know, Signors, that the Lady Laurentini had for some months shewn symptoms of a dejected mind, nay, of a disturbed imagination. Her mood was very unequal ; sometimes she was sunk in calm melancholy, and, at others, as I have been told, she betrayed all the symptoms of frantic madness. It was one night in the month of October, after she had recovered from one of those fits of excess, and had sunk again into her usual melancholy, that she retired alone to her chamber, and forbade all interruption. It was the chamber at the end of the corridor, Signors, where we had the affray, last night. From that hour, she was seen no more."

"How ! seen no more !" said Bertolini, "was not her body found in the chamber ?"

"Were her remains never found ?" cried the rest of the company altogether.

"Never !" replied Montoni.

"What reasons were there to suppose she destroyed herself, then ?" said Bertolini.—"Aye, what reasons ?" said Verezzi.—

"How happened it, that her remains were never found ? Although she killed herself, she could not bury herself," Montoni

looked indignantly at Verezzi, who began to apologize. "Your pardon, Signor," said he: "I did not consider, that the lady was your relative, when I spoke of her so lightly."

Montoni accepted the apology.

"But the Signor will oblige us with the reasons, which urged him to believe, that the lady committed suicide."

"Those I will explain hereafter," said Montoni: "at present let me relate a most extraordinary circumstance. This conversation goes no further, Signors. Listen, then, to what I am going to say."

"Listen!" said a voice.

They were all again silent, and the countenance of Montoni changed. "This is no illusion of the fancy," said Cavigni, at length breaking the profound silence.—"No," said Bertolini; "I heard it myself, now. Yet here is no person in the room but ourselves!"

"This is very extraordinary," said Montoni, suddenly rising. "This is not to be borne; here is some deception, some trick. I will know what it means."

All the company rose from their chairs in confusion.

"It is very odd!" said Bertolini. "Here is really no stranger in the room. If it is a trick, Signor, you will do well to punish the author of it severely."

"A trick! what else can it be?" said Cavigni, affecting a laugh.

The servants were now summoned, and the chamber was searched, but no person was found. The surprise and consternation of the company increased. Montoni was discomposed. "We will leave this room," said he, and the subject of our conversation also; it is too solemn." His guests were equally ready to quit the apartment; but the subject had roused their curiosity, and they entreated Montoni to withdraw to another chamber, and finish it; no entreaties could, however, prevail with him. Notwithstanding his efforts to appear at ease, he was visibly and greatly disordered.

"Why, Signor, you are not superstitious," cried Verezzi, jeeringly; "you, who have so often laughed at the credulity of others!"

"I am not superstitious," replied Montoni, regarding him with stern displeasure, "though I know how to despise the common place sentences, which are frequently uttered against superstition. I will inquire further into this affair." He then left the room; and his guests, separating for the night, retired to their respective apartments.

C H A P. XXII.

"He wears the rose of youth upon his cheek."

SHAKESPEARE.

WE now return to Valancourt, who, it may be remembered, remained at Tholouse, sometime after the departure of Emily, restless and miserable. Each morrow, that approached he designed should carry him from thence; yet to-morrow and to-morrow came, and still saw him lingering in the scene of his former happiness. He could not immediately tear himself from the spot, where he had been accustomed to converse with Emily, or from the objects they had viewed together, which appeared to him memorials of her affection, as well as a kind of surety for its faithfulness; and, next to the pain of bidding her adieu, was that of leaving the scenes, which so powerfully awakened her image. Sometimes he had bribed a servant, who had been left in the care of Madame Montoni's chateau, to permit him to visit the gardens, and there he would wander, for hours together, wrapt in a melancholy, not unpleasing. The terrace and the pavilion at the end of it, where he had taken leave of Emily, on the eve of her departure from Tholouse, were his most favourite haunts. There, as he walked, or leaned from the window of the building, he would endeavour to recollect all she had said, on that night; to catch the tones of her voice, as they faintly vibrated on his memory, and to remember the exact expression of her countenance, which sometimes came suddenly to his fancy, like a vision; that beautiful countenance, which awakened, as by instantaneous magic, all the tenderness of his heart, and seemed to tell with irresistible eloquence—that he had lost her for ever! At these moments, his hurried steps would have discovered to a spectator the despair of his heart. The character of Montoni, such as he had received from hints, and such as his fears represented it, would rise to his view, together with all the dangers it seemed to threaten to Emily and to his love. He blamed himself, that he had not urged these more forcibly to her, while it might have been in his power to detain her, and that he had suffered an absurd and criminal delicacy, as he termed it, to conquer so soon the reasonable arguments he had opposed to this journey. Any evil that might have attended their marriage, seemed so inferior to those, which now threatened their love, or even to the sufferings, that absence occasioned,

that he wondered how he could have ceased to urge his suit, till he had convinced her of its propriety and he would certainly now have followed her to Italy, if he could have been spared from his regiment for so long a journey. His regiment, indeed, soon reminded him, that he had other duties to attend, than those of love.

A short time after his arrival at his brother's house, he was summoned to join his brother officers, and he accompanied a battalion to Paris; where a scene of novelty and gaiety opened upon him, such as, till then, he had only a faint idea of. But gaiety disgusted, and company fatigued, his sick mind; and he became an object of unceasing raillery to his companions, from whom, whenever he could steal an opportunity, he escaped, to think of Emily. The scenes around him, however, and the company with whom he was obliged to mingle, engaged his attention, though they failed to amuse his fancy, and thus gradually weakened the habit of yielding to lamentation, till it appeared less a duty to his love to indulge it. Among his brother officers were many, who added to the ordinary character of a French soldier's gaiety some of those fascinating qualities, which too frequently throw a veil over folly, and sometimes even soften the features of vice into smiles. To these men the reserved and thoughtful manners of Valancourt were a kind of tacit censure on their own, for which they rallied him when present, and plotted against him when absent; they gloried in the thought of reducing him to their own level, and, considering it to be a spirited frolic, determined to accomplish it.

Valancourt was a stranger to the gradual progress of scheme and intrigue, against which he could not be on his guard. He had not been accustomed to receive ridicule, and he could ill endure its sting; he resented it, and this only drew upon him a louder laugh. To escape from such scenes, he fled into solitude, and there the image of Emily met him, and revived the pangs of love and despair. He then sought to renew those tasteful studies, which had been the delight of his early years; but his mind had lost the tranquillity, which is necessary for their enjoyment. To forget himself and the grief and anxiety, which the idea of her recalled, he would quit his solitude, and again mingle in the crowd—glad of a temporary relief, and rejoicing to snatch amusement for the moment.

Thus passed weeks after weeks, time gradually softening his sorrow, and habit strengthening his desire of amusement, till the scenes around him seemed to awaken into a new character, and Valancourt, to have fallen among them from the clouds.

His figure and address made him a welcome visitor, wherever he had been introduced, and he soon frequented the most gay and fashionable circles of Paris. Among these, was the assembly of the Countess Lacleur, a woman of eminent beauty and captivating manners. She had passed the spring of youth, but her wit prolonged the triumph of its reign, and they mutually assisted the fame of each other; for those, who were charmed by her loveliness, spoke with enthusiasm of her talents; and others, who admired her playful imagination, declared, that her personal graces were unrivalled. But her imagination was merely playful, and her wit, if such it could be called, was brilliant, rather than just; it dazzled, and its fallacy escaped the detection of the moment; for the accents, in which she pronounced it, and the smile that accompanied them, were, a spell upon the judgment of the auditors. Her *petits soupers* were the most tasteful of any in Paris, and were frequented by many of the second class of literati. She was fond of music, was herself a scientific performer, and had frequently concerts at her house. Valancourt, who passionately loved music, and who sometimes assisted at these concerts, admired her execution, but remembered with a sigh the eloquent simplicity of Emily's songs and the natural expression of her manner, which waited not to be approved by the judgment, but found their way at once to the heart.

Madame *La Comtesse* had often deep play at her house, which she affected to restrain, but secretly encouraged; and it was well known among her friends, that the splendour of her establishment was chiefly supplied from the profits of her tables. But her *petits soupers* were the most charming imaginable! Here were all the delicacies of the four quarters of the world, all the wit and the lighter efforts of genius, all the graces of conversation—the smiles of beauty, and the charms of music; and Valancourt passed his pleasantest, as well as most dangerous hours in these parties.

His brother, who remained with his family in Gascony, had contented himself with giving him letters of introduction to such of his relations, residing at Paris, as the latter was not already known to. All these were persons of some distinction; and, as neither the person, mind, or manners of Valancourt the younger threatened to disgrace their alliance, they received him with as much kindness as their nature, hardened by uninterrupted prosperity, would admit of; but their attentions did not extend to acts of real friendship; for they were too much occupied by their own pursuits, to feel any interest in his; and thus he was

set down in the midst of Paris, in the pride of youth, with an open, unsuspicious temper and ardent affections, without one friend to warn him of the dangers, to which he was exposed. Emily, who, had she been present, would have saved him from these evils by awakening his heart, and engaging him in worthy pursuits, now only increased his danger ;—it was to lose the grief, which the remembrance of her occasioned, that he first sought amusement ; and for this end he pursued it, till habit made it an object of abstract interest.

There was also a Marchioness Champfort, a young widow, at whose assemblies he passed much of his time. She was handsome, still more artful, gay and fond of intrigue. The society, which she drew round her, was less elegant and more vicious, than that of the Countess Lacleur : but, as she had address enough to throw a veil, though but a slight one, over the worst parts of her character, she was still visited by many persons of what is called distinction. Valancourt was introduced to her parties by two of his brother officers, whose late ridicule he had now forgiven so far, that he could sometimes join in the laugh, which a mention of his former manners would renew.

The gaiety of the most splendid court in Europe, the magnificence of the palaces, entertainments, and equipages, that surrounded him—all conspired to dazzle his imagination, and reanimate his spirits, and the example and maxims of his military associates to delude his mind. Emily's image, indeed, still lived there ; but it was no longer the friend, the monitor, that saved him from himself, and, to which he retired to weep the sweet, yet melancholy tears of tenderness. When he had recourse to it, it assumed a countenance of mild reproach, that wrung his soul and called forth tears of unmingled misery ; his only escape from which was to forget the object of it, and he endeavoured, therefore, to think of Emily as seldom as he could.

Thus dangerously circumstanced was Valancourt, at the time, when Emily was suffering at Venice, from the persecuting addresses of Count Moraho, and the unjust authority of Montoni ; at which period we leave him.

C H A P. XXIII.

"The image of a wicked, heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does shew the mood of a much troubled breast."

KING JOHN.

LEAVING the gay scenes of Paris, we return to those of the gloomy Apennine, where Emily's thoughts were still faithful to Valancourt. Looking to him as to her only hope, she recollected, with jealous exactness, every assurance and every proof she had witnessed of his affection; read again and again the letters she had received from him; weighed, with intense anxiety, the force of every word, that spoke of his attachment; and dried her tears, as she trusted in his truth.

Montoni, meanwhile, had made strict inquiry, concerning the strange circumstance of his alarm, without obtaining information; and was, at length, obliged to account for it by the reasonable supposition, that it was a mischievous trick played off by one of his domestics. His disagreements with Madame Montoni, on the subject of her settlements, were now more frequent than ever; he even confined her entirely to her own apartment, and did not scruple to threaten her with much greater severity, should she persevere in a refusal.

Reason, had she consulted it, would now have perplexed her in the choice of a conduct to be adopted. It would have pointed out the danger of irritating by further opposition a man, such as Montoni had proved himself to be, and to whose power she had so entirely committed herself; and it would also have told her, of what extreme importance to her future comfort it was, to reserve for herself those possessions, which would enable her to live independently of Montoni should she ever escape from his immediate control. But she was directed by a more decisive guide than reason—the spirit of revenge, which urged her to oppose violence to violence, and obstinacy to obstinacy.

Wholly confined to the solitude of her apartment, she was now reduced to solicit the society she so lately rejected; for Emily was the only person except Annette, with whom she was permitted to converse.

Generously anxious for her peace, Emily, therefore tried to persuade, when she could not convince, and sought by every gentle means to induce her to forbear that asperity of reply, which so greatly irritated Montoni. The pride of her aunt

did sometimes soften to the soothing voice of Emily, and there even were moments when she regarded her affectionate attentions with good will.

The scenes of terrible contention, to which Emily was frequently compelled to be witness, exhausted her spirits more than any circumstances, that had occurred since her departure from Tholouse. The gentleness and goodness of her parents, together with the scenes of her early happiness, often stole on her mind, like the visions of a higher world; while the characters and circumstances, now passing beneath her eye, excited both terror and surprise. She could scarcely have imagined, that passions so fierce and so various, as those which Montoni exhibited, could have been concentrated in one individual; yet what more surprised her, was, that on great occasions, he could bend these passions, wild as they were, to the cause of his interest, and generally could disguise in his countenance their operation on his mind; but she had seen him too often, when he had thought it unnecessary to conceal his nature, to be deceived on such occasions.

Her present life appeared like the dream of a distempered imagination, or like one of those frightful fictions, in which the wild genius of the poets sometimes delighted. Reflection brought only regret, and anticipation terror. How often did she wish to "steal the lark's wing, and mount the swiftest gale," that Languedoc and repose might once more be hers!

Of Count Morano's health she made frequent inquiry; but Annette heard only vague reports of his danger, and that his surgeon had said he would never leave the cottage alive; while Emily could not but be shocked to think, that she, however innocently, might be the means of his death; and Annette who did not fail to observe her emotion, interpreted it in her own way. But a circumstance soon occurred, which entirely withdrew Annette's attention from this subject, and awakened the surprise and curiosity so natural to her. Coming one day to Emily's apartment, with a countenance full of importance, "What can all this mean, ma'amfelle?" said she. "Would I was once safe in Languedoc again, they should never catch me going on my travels any more! I must think it a fine thing, truly, to come abroad, and see foreign parts! I little thought I was coming to be caught up in an old castle, among such dreary mountains, with the chance of being murdered, or what is as good, having my throat cut!"

"What can all this mean, indeed, Annette?" said Emily, in astonishment.

"Aye, ma'amfelle, you may look surpris'd ; but you won't believe it, perhaps, till they have murdered you, too. You would not believe about the ghost I told you of, though I shew'd you the very place, where it us'd to appear !—You will believe nothing, ma'amfelle."

"Not till you speak more reasonably, Annette ; for Heaven's sake explain your meaning. You spoke of murder !"

"Aye, ma'amfelle, they are coming to murder us all, perhaps ; but what signifies explaining ?—you will not believe."

Emily again desired her to relate what she had seen or heard.

"O, I have seen enough, ma'am, and heard too much, as Ludovico can prove. Poor soul ! they will murder him, too ! I little thought, when he sung those sweet verses under my lattice, at Venice !" —Emily looked impatient and displeased.—"Well, ma'amfelle, as I was saying, these preparations about the castle, and these strange looking people, that are calling here every day, and the Signor's cruel usage of my lady, and his odd goings on—all these, as I told Ludovico, can bode no good.—And he bid me hold my tongue. So, says I, the Signor's strangely altered, Ludovico, in this gloomy castle, to what he was in France ; there all so gay ! Nobody so gallant to my lady, then ; and he could smile, too, upon a poor servant, sometimes, and jeer her, too, good-naturedly enough. I remember once, when he said to me, as I was going out of my lady's dressing room—Annette, says he—"

"Never mind what the Signor said," interrupted Emily ; "but tell me, at once, the circumstance, which has thus alarmed you."

"Aye, ma'amfelle," rejoined Annette, "that is just what Ludovico said : says he, Never mind what the Signor says to you. So I told him what I thought about the Signor. He is so strangely altered, said I : for now he is so haughty, and so commanding, and so sharp with my lady ; and, if he meets one, he'll scarcely look at one, unless it be to frown. So much the better, says Ludovico, so much the better. And to tell you the truth, ma'amfelle, I thought this was a very ill-natured speech of Ludovico : but I went on. And then, says I, he is always knitting his brows ; and if one speaks to him, he does not hear ; and then he sits up counselling so, of a night, with the other Signors—there they are, till long past midnight discoursing together ! Aye, but says Ludovico, you don't know what they are counselling about. No, said I, but I can guess—it is about my young lady. Upon that, Ludovico burst out a laughing, quite

loud ; so he put me in a huff, for I did not like that either I, or you ma'amselle, should be laughed at ; and I turned away quick, but he stopped me. 'Don't be affronted, Annette,' said he, 'but I cannot help laughing ;' and with that he laughed again. 'What !' says he, do you think the Signors sit up, night after night, only to counsel about thy young lady ! No, no, there is something more in the wind than that. And these repairs about the castle, and these preparations about the ramparts—they are not making about young ladies.' Why surely, said I, the Signor, my master, is not going to make war ? 'Make war !' said Ludovico, 'what, upon the mountains and the woods ? for here is no living soul to make war upon, that I see.'

"What are these preparations for, then ? said I ; why surely nobody is coming to take away my master's castle ! 'Then there are so many ill looking fellows coming to the castle every day,' says Ludovico, without answering my question, 'and the Signor sees them all, and talks with them all, and they all stay in the neighbourhood ! By holy St. Marco ! some of them are the most cut-throat-looking dogs I ever set my eyes upon.'

"I asked Ludovico again, if he thought they were coming to take away my master's castle ; and he said, No, he did not think they were, but he did not know for certain. 'Then, yesterday,' said he, but you must not tell this, ma'amselle, 'yesterday, a party of these men came, and left all their horses in the castle stables, where, it seems, they are to stay, for the Signor ordered them all to be entertained with the best provender in the manger ; but the men are, most of them ; in the neighbouring cottages.'

"So, ma'amselle, I came to tell you all this, for I never heard any thing so strange in my life. But what can these ill-looking men be come about, if it is not to murder us ? And the Signor knows this, or why should he be so civil to them ? And why should he fortify the castle, and counsel so much with the other Signors, and be so thoughtful ?"

"Is this all you have to tell, Annette ?" said Emily. "Have you heard nothing else that alarms you ?"

"Nothing else, ma'amselle !" said Annette ; "why, is not this enough ?" "Quite enough for my patience, Annette, but not quite enough to convince me we are all to be murdered, though I acknowledge here is sufficient food for curiosity." She forbore to speak her apprehensions, because she would not encourage Annette's wild terrors ; but the present circumstances of the castle both surprised, and alarmed her. Annette, having told her tale, left the chamber, on the wing for new wonders.

In the evening, Emily had passed some melancholy hours with Madame Montoni, and was retiring to rest, when she was alarmed by a strange and loud knocking at her chamber door, and then a heavy weight fell against it, that almost burst it open. She called to know who was there, and receiving no answer, repeated the call; but a chilling silence followed. It occurred to her—for, at this moment, she could not reason on the probability of circumstances—that some one of the strangers, lately arrived at the castle, had discovered her apartment, and was come with such intent, as their looks rendered too possible—to rob, perhaps to murder, her. The moment she admitted this possibility, terror supplied the place of conviction, and a kind of instinctive remembrance of her remote situation from the family heightened it to a degree, that almost overcame her senses.—She looked at the door, which led to the staircase, expecting to see it open, and listening, in fearful silence, for a return of the noise, till she began to think it had proceeded from this door, and a wish of escaping through the opposite one rushed upon her mind. She went to the gallery door, and then, fearing to open it, lest some person might be silently lurking for her without, she stopped, but with her eyes fixed in expectation upon the opposite door of the staircase. As thus she stood, she heard a faint breathing near her, and became convinced, that some person was on the other side of the door, which was already locked. She sought for other fastenings, but there was none.

While she yet listened, the breathing was distinctly heard, and her terror was not soothed, when, looking round her wide and lonely chamber, she again considered her remote situation. As she stood hesitating whether to call for assistance, the continuance of the stillness surprised her; and her spirits would have revived, had she not continued to hear the faint breathing, that convinced her, the person, whoever it was, had not quitted the door.

At length, worn out with anxiety, she determined to call loudly for assistance from her casement, and was advancing to it, when, whether the terror of her mind gave her ideal sounds, or that real ones did come, she thought footsteps were ascending the private staircase; and, expecting to see its door unclose, she forgot all other cause of alarm, and retreated towards the corridor. Here she endeavoured to make her escape, but, on opening the door, was very near falling over a person, who lay on the floor without. She screamed, and would have passed, but her trembling frame refused to support her; and the moment, in which she leaned against the wall of the gallery, allow-

ed her leisure to observe the figure before her, and to recognize the features of Annette. Fear instantly yielded to surprise. She spoke in vain to the poor girl, who remained senseless on the floor, and then, losing all consciousness of her own weakness, hurried to her assistance.

When Annette recovered, she was helped by Emily into the chamber, but was still unable to speak, and looked round her, as if her eyes followed some person in the room. Emily tried to soothe her disturbed spirits, and forbore at present, to ask her any questions; but the faculty of speech was never long withheld from Annette, and she explained, in broken sentences, and in her tedious way, the occasion of her disorder. She affirmed, and with a solemnity of conviction, that almost staggered the incredulity of Emily, that she had seen an apparition, as she was passing to her bedroom, through the corridor.

"I had heard strange stories of that chamber before," said Annette: "but as it was so near yours, *ma'amfelle*, I would not tell them to you, because they would frighten you. The servants had told me, often and often, that it was haunted, and, that was the reason why it was shut up: nay, for that matter, why the whole string of these rooms, here, are shut up. I quaked whenever I went by, and I must say, I did sometimes think I heard odd noises within it. But, as I said, as I was passing along the corridor, and not thinking a word about the matter, or even of the strange voice that the Signors heard the other night, all of a sudden comes a great light, and, looking behind me, there was a tall figure, (I saw it as plainly *ma'amfelle*, as I see you at this moment) a tall figure gliding along (Oh! I cannot describe how!) into the room that is always shut up, and nobody has the key of it but the Signor, and the door shut directly.

"Then it doubtless was the Signor," said Emily.

"O no, *ma'amfelle*, it could not be him, for I left him busy a quarrelling in my lady's dressing room!"

"You bring me strange tales, Annette," said Emily: "it was but this morning, that you would have terrified me with the apprehension of murder; and now you would persuade me, you have seen a ghost! These wonderful stories come too quickly."

"Nay, *ma'amfelle*, I will say no more, only, if I had not been frightened, I should not have fainted dead away, so. I ran as fast as I could, to get to your door; but, what was worst of all, I could not call out; then I thought something must be strangely the matter with me, and directly I dropt down."

"Was it the chamber where the black veil hangs?" said Emily. "O! no, *ma'amselle*, it was one nearer to this. What shall I do, to get to my room? I would not go out into the corridor again, for the whole world!" Emily, whose spirits had been severely shocked, and who, therefore, did not like the thought of passing the night alone, told her she might sleep where she was. "O, no, *ma'amselle*," replied Annette, "I would not sleep in the room now, for a thousand sequins!"

Wearied and disappointed, Emily first ridiculed, though she shared, her fears, and then tried to sooth them; but neither attempt succeeded, and the girl persisted in believing and affirming, that what she had seen was nothing human. It was not till sometime after Emily had recovered her composure, that she recollected the steps she had heard on the staircase—a remembrance, however, which made her insist that Annette should pass the night with her, and, with much difficulty, she, at length, prevailed, assisted by that part of the girl's fear, which concerned the corridor.

Early on the following morning, as Emily crossed the hall to the ramparts, she heard a noisy bustle in the court yard, and the clatter of horses' hoofs. Such unusual sounds excited her curiosity; and, instead of going to the ramparts, she went to an upper casement, from whence she saw, in the court below, a large party of horsemen, dressed in a singular, but uniform, habit, and completely, though variously armed. They wore a kind of short jacket, composed of black and scarlet, and several of them had a cloak, of plain black, which, covering the person entirely, hung down to the stirrups. As one of these cloaks glanced aside, she saw, beneath, daggers, apparently of different sizes, tucked into the horseman's belt. She further observed, that these were carried, in the same manner, by many of the horsemen without cloaks, most of whom bore also pikes, or javelins. On their heads, were the small Italian caps, some of which were distinguished by black feathers. Whether these caps gave a fierce air to the countenance, or that the countenances they surmounted had naturally such an appearance, Emily thought she had never, till then, seen an assemblage of faces so savage and terrific.—While she gazed, she almost fancied herself surrounded by banditti; and a vague thought glanced athwart her fancy—that Montoni was the captain of the group before her, and that this castle was to be the place of rendezvous. The strange and horrible supposition was but momentary, though her reason could supply none more probable, and though she discovered, among

the band, the strangers she had formerly noticed with so much alarm, who were now distinguished by the black plume.

While she continued gazing, Cavigni, Verezzi, and Bertolini came forth from the hall, habited like the rest, except that they wore hats, with a mixed plume of black and scarlet, and that their arms differed from those of the rest of the party. As they mounted their horses, Emily was struck with the exulting joy, expressed on the visage of Verezzi, while Cavigni was gay, yet with a shade of thought on his countenance; and, as he managed his horse with dexterity, his graceful and commanding figure, which exhibited the majesty of a hero, had never appeared to more advantage. Emily, as she observed him, thought he somewhat resembled Valancourt, in the spirit and dignity of his person; but she looked in vain for the noble, benevolent countenance—the soul's intelligence, which overspread the features of the latter.

As she was hoping, she scarcely knew why, that Montoni would accompany the party, he appeared at the hall door, but unaccounted. Having carefully observed the horsemen, conversed awhile with the cavaliers, and bidden them farewell, the band wheeled round the court, and, led by Verezzi, issued forth under the portcullis; Montoni following to the portal, and gazing after them for sometime. Emily then retired from the casement, and, now certain of being unmolested, went to walk on the ramparts, from whence she soon after saw the party winding among the mountains to the west, appearing and disappearing between the woods, till distance confused their figures, consolidated their numbers, and only a dingy mass appeared moving along the heights.

Emily observed, that no workmen were on the ramparts, and that the repairs of the fortifications seemed to be completed. While she fauntered thoughtfully on, she heard distant footsteps, and, raising her eyes, saw several men lurking under the castle walls, who were evidently not workmen, but looked, as if they would have accorded well with the party, which was gone. Wondering where Annette had hid herself so long, who might have explained some of the late circumstances, and then considering that Madame Montoni was probably risen, she went to her dressing room, where she mentioned what had occurred; but Madame Montoni either would not, or could not, give any explanation of the event. The Signor's reserve to his wife, on this subject, was probably nothing more than usual; yet, to Emily, it gave an air of mystery to the whole affair, that seemed to hint, there was danger, if not villainy, in his schemes.

Annette presently came, and, as usual, was full of alarm ; to her lady's eager inquiries of what she had heard among the servants, she replied :

" Ah, Madam ! nobody knows what it is all about, but old Carlo ; he knows well enough, I dare say, but he is as close as his master. Some say the Signor is going out to frighten the enemy, as they call it : but where is the enemy ? Then others say, he is going to take away some body's castle : but I am sure he has room enough in his own, without taking other people's ; and I am sure I should like it a great deal better, if there were more people to fill it."

" Ah ! you will soon have your wish, I fear," replied Madame Montoni.

" No, madam, but such ill looking fellows are not worth having. I mean such gallant, smart, merry fellows as Ludovico, who is always telling droll stories, to make one laugh. It was but yesterday he told me such a *humourfome* tale ! I can't help laughing at it now.—Says he—"

" Well, we can dispense with the story," said her lady. " Ah !" continued Annette, " he sees a great way, a great way further than other people ! Now he sees into all the Signor's meaning, without knowing a word about the matter !"

" How is that ?" said Madame Montoni.

" Why he says—but he made me promise not to tell, and I would not disoblige him for the world."

" What is it he made you promise not to tell ?" said her lady, sternly. " I insist upon knowing immediately—what is it he made you promise ?"

" O Madam," cried Annette, " I would not tell for the universe !" " I insist upon your telling this instant," said Madame Montoni. " O dear madam ! I would not tell for an hundred sequins ! You would not have me forswear myself, madam !" exclaimed Annette.

" I will not wait another moment," said Madam Montoni. Annette was silent.

" The Signor shall be informed of this directly," rejoined her mistress : " he will make you discover all."

" It is Ludovico, who has discovered," said Annette : " but for mercy's sake, madam, don't tell the Signor, and you shall know all directly." Madam Montoni said, that she would not.

" Well then, madam, Ludovico says, that the Signor, my master, is—is—that is, he only thinks so, and any body, you know, madam, is free to think—that the Signor, my master, is—is—"

"Is what?" said her lady impatiently.

"That the Signor, my master, is going to be—a great robber—that is—he is going to rob on his own account ;—to be, (but I am sure I don't understand what he means) to be a captain of—robbers."

"Art thou in thy senses, Annette?" said Madame Montoni ; or is this a trick to deceive me ? Tell me, this instant, what Ludovico *did* say to thee ;—no equivocation ;—this instant."

"Nay, madam," cried Annette, "if this is all I am to get for having told the secret"—Her mistress thus continued to insist, and Annette to protest, till Montoni, himself, appeared, who bade the latter leave the room, and she withdrew, trembling for the fate of her story. Emily also was retiring, but her aunt desired she would stay ; and Montoni had so often made her a witness of their contention, that he no longer had scruples on that account.

"I insist upon knowing this instant, Signor, what all this means ;" said his wife—"what are all these armed men, whom they tell me of, gone out about ?" Montoni answered her only with a look of scorn ; and Emily whispered something to her. "It does not signify," said her aunt : "I will know ; and I will know, too, what the castle has been fortified for."

"Come, come," said Montoni, "other business brought me here. I must be trifled with no longer. I have immediate occasion for what I demand—those estates must be given up, without further contention ; or I may find a way——"

"They never shall be given up," interrupted Madame Montoni : "they never shall enable you to carry on your wild schemes ;—but what are these ? I will know. Do you expect the castle to be attacked ? Do you expect enemies ? Am I to be shut up here, to be killed in a siege ?"

"Sign the writings," said Montoni, "and you shall know more."

"What enemy can be coming?" continued his wife. "Have you entered into the service of the state ? Am I to be blocked up here to die ?"

"That may possibly happen," said Montoni, "unless you yield to my demand : for, come what may, you shall not quit the castle till then." Madame Montoni burst into loud lamentation, which she as suddenly checked, considering that her husband's assertions might be only artifices, employed to extort her consent. She hinted this suspicion, and, in the next moment told him also, that his designs were not so honourable as to serve

the state, and that she believed he had only commenced a captain of banditti, to join the enemies of Venice, in plundering and laying waste the surrounding country.

Montoni looked at her for a moment with a steady and stern countenance ; while Emily trembled, and his wife, for once, thought she had said too much. " You shall be removed, this night," said he, " to the east turret : there, perhaps, you may understand the danger of offending a man, who has an unlimited power over you."

Emily now fell at his feet, and, with tears of terror, supplicated for her aunt, who sat, trembling with fear, and indignation ; now ready to pour forth execrations, and now to join the intercessions of Emily, Montoni, however, soon interrupted these entreaties with an horrible oath ; and, as he burst from Emily, leaving his cloak in her hand, she fell to the floor, with a force, that occasioned her a severe blow on the forehead. But he quitted the room, without attempting to raise her, whose attention was called from herself by a deep groan from Madame Montoni, who continued otherwise unmoved in her chair, and had not fainted. Emily hastening to her assistance, saw her eyes rolling and her features convulsed.

Having spoken to her, without receiving an answer, she brought water, and supported her head, while she held it to her lips ; but the increasing convulsions soon compelled Emily to call for assistance. On her way through the hall, in search of Annette, she met Montoni, whom she told what had happened, and conjured to return and comfort her aunt ; but he turned silently away, with a look of indifference, and went out upon the ramparts. At length she found old Carlo and Annette, and they hastened to the dressing room, where Madame Montoni had fallen on the floor, and was lying in strong convulsions. Having lifted her into the adjoining room, and laid her on the bed, the force of her disorder still made all their strength necessary to hold her, while Annette trembled and sobbed, and old Carlo looked silently and piteously on, as his feeble hands grasped those of his mistress, till, turning his eyes upon Emily, he exclaimed, " Good God ; Signora, what is the matter ?"

Emily looked calmly at him, and saw his inquiring eyes fixed on her : and Annette, looking up, screamed loudly ; for Emily's face was stained with blood, which continued to fall slowly from her forehead : but her attention had been so entirely occupied by the scene before her, that she had felt no pain from the wound. She now held an handkerchief to her face, and,

notwithstanding her faintness, continued to watch Madame Montoni, the violence of whose convulsions was abating, till at length they ceased, and left her in a kind of stupor.

"My aunt must remain quiet," said Emily. "Go, good Carlo; if we should want your assistance, I will send for you. In the meantime, if you have an opportunity, speak kindly of your mistress to your master."

"Alas!" said Carlo, "I have seen too much! I have little influence with the Signor. But do, dear young lady, take some care of yourself; that is an ugly wound, and you look sadly."

"Thank you, my friend, for your consideration," said Emily, smiling kindly: "the wound is trifling, it came by a fall."

Carlo shook his head, and left the room; and Emily, with Annette, continued to watch by her aunt. "Did my lady tell the Signor what Ludovico said, ma'amfelle?" asked Annette in a whisper; but Emily quieted her fears on the subject.

"I thought what this quarrelling would come to," continued Annette: "I suppose the Signor has been beating my lady."

"No, no, Annette, you are totally mistaken, nothing extraordinary has happened."

"Why extraordinary things happen here so often, ma'amfelle, that there is nothing in them. Here is another legion of those ill looking fellows, come to the castle, this morning."

"Hush! Annette, you will disturb my aunt; we will talk of that by and bye."

They continued watching silently, till Madame Montoni uttered a low sigh, when Emily took her hand, and spoke soothingly to her; but the former gazed with unconscious eyes, and it was long before she knew her niece. Her first words then inquired for Montoni; to which Emily replied by an entreaty, that she would compose her spirits, and consent to be kept quiet, adding, that, if she wished any message to be conveyed to him, she would herself deliver it. "No," said her aunt faintly, "no—I have nothing new to tell him. Does he persist in saying I shall be removed from my chamber?"

Emily replied, that he had not spoken, on the subject, since Madame Montoni heard him; and then she tried to divert her attention to some other topic; but her aunt seemed to be inattentive to what she said, and lost in secret thoughts. Emily having brought her some refreshment, now left her to the care of Annette, and went in search of Montoni, whom she found on a remote part of the rampart, conversing among a group of the men described by Annette. They stood round him with fierce,

yet subjugated, looks, while he, speaking earnestly, and pointing to the walls, did not perceive Emily, who remained at some distance, waiting till he should be at leisure, and observing involuntarily the appearance of one man, more savage than his fellows, who stood resting on his pike, and looking, over the shoulders of a comrade, at Montoni, to whom he listened with uncommon earnestness. This man was apparently of low condition; yet his looks appeared not to acknowledge the superiority of Montoni, as did those of his companions; and sometimes they even assumed an air of authority, which the decisive manner of the Signor could not repress. Some few words of Montoni then passed in the wind; and, as the men were separating, she heard him say, "This evening, then, begin the watch at sunset."

"At sunset, Signor," replied one or two of them, and walked away; while Emily approached Montoni, who appeared desirous of avoiding her: but, though she observed this, she had courage to proceed. She endeavoured to intercede once more for her aunt, represented to him her sufferings, and urged the danger of exposing her to a cold apartment in her present state. "She suffers by her own folly," said Montoni, "and is not to be pitied;—she knows how she may avoid these sufferings in future—if she is removed to the turret, it will be her own fault. Let her be obedient, and sign the writings you heard of, and I will think no more of it."

When Emily ventured still to plead, he sternly silenced and rebuked her for interfering in his domestic affairs, but, at length, dismissed her with this concession—That he would not remove Madame Montoni, on the ensuing night, but allow her till the next to consider, whether she would resign her settlements or be imprisoned in the east turret of the castle, "where she shall find," he added, "a punishment she may not expect."

Emily then hastened to inform her aunt of this short respite and of the alternative, that awaited her, to which the latter made no reply, but appeared thoughtful, while Emily, in consideration of her extreme languor, wished to sooth her mind by leading it to less interesting topics: and, though these efforts were unsuccessful, and Madame Montoni became peevish, her resolution, on the contended point, seemed somewhat to relax, and Emily recommended as her only means of safety, that she should submit to Montoni's demand. "You know not what you advise," said her aunt. "Do you understand, that these estates will descend to you at my death, if I persist in a refusal?"

"I was ignorant of that circumstance, madam," replied Emily, "but the knowledge of it cannot withhold me from advising you to adopt the conduct, which not only your peace, but, I fear, your safety requires, and I entreat, that you will not suffer a consideration comparatively so trifling, to make you hesitate a moment in resigning them."

"Are you sincere, niece?" "Is it possible you can doubt it, madam?" Her aunt appeared to be affected. "You are not unworthy of these estates, niece," said she: "I would wish to keep them for your sake—you shew a virtue I did not expect."

"How have I deserved this reproof, madam?" said Emily sorrowfully.

"Reproof!" replied Madame Montoni: "I meant to praise your virtue."

"Alas! here is no exertion of virtue," rejoined Emily, "for here is no temptation to be overcome."

"Yet Monsieur Valancourt"—said her aunt. "O madam!" interrupted Emily, anticipating what she would have said, "do not let me glance on that subject: do not let my mind be stained with a wish so shockingly self interested." She immediately changed the topic, and continued with Madame Montoni, till she withdrew to her apartment for the night.

At that hour the castle was perfectly still, and every inhabitant of it, except herself, seemed to have retired to rest. As she passed along the wide and lonely galleries, dusky and silent, she felt forlorn and apprehensive of—she scarcely knew what; but when, entering the corridor, she recollected the incident of the preceding night, a dread seized her, lest a subject of alarm, similar to that, which had befallen Annette, should occur to her, and which, whether real, or ideal, would, she felt, have an almost equal effect upon her weakened spirits. The chamber to which Annette had alluded, she did not exactly know, but understood it to be one of those she must pass in the way to her own; and, sending a fearful look forward into the gloom, she stepped lightly and cautiously along, till coming to a door, from whence issued a low sound, she hesitated and paused; and during the delay of that moment, her fears so much increased, that she had no power to move from the spot. Believing, that she heard a human voice within, she was somewhat revived; but in the next moment, the door was opened, and a person, whom she conceived to be Montoni, appeared, who instantly started back, and closed it, though not before she had seen, by the light that burned in the chamber another person, sitting in a melancholy

attitude by the fire. Her terror vanished, but her astonishment only began, which was now roused by the mysterious secrecy of Montoni's manner, and by the discovery of a person, whom he thus visited at midnight, in an apartment which had long been shut up, and of which such extraordinary reports were circulated.

While she thus continued hesitating, strongly prompted to watch Montoni's motions, yet fearing to irritate him by appearing to notice them, the door was again opened cautiously, and as instantly closed as before. She then stepped softly to her chamber, which was the next but one to this, but, having put down her lamp, returned to an obscure corner of the corridor, to observe the proceedings of this half seen person, and to ascertain, whether it was indeed Montoni.

Having waited in silent expectation for a few minutes, with her eyes fixed on the door, it was again opened, and the same person appeared, whom she now knew to be Montoni. He looked cautiously round, without perceiving her, then, stepping forward, closed the door, and left the corridor. Soon after, Emily heard the door fastened on the inside, and she withdrew to her chamber, wondering at what she had witnessed.

It was now twelve o'clock. As she closed her casement, she heard footsteps on the terrace below, and saw imperfectly, through the gloom several persons advancing, who passed under the casement. She then heard the clink of arms, and, in the next moment, the watchword; when, recollecting the command she had overheard from Montoni, and the hour of the night, she understood, that these men were for the first time, relieving guard in the castle. Having listened till all was again still, she retired to sleep.

C H A P. XXIV.

"And shall no lay of death
With pleasing murmur sooth
Her parted soul?
Shall no tear wet her grave?"

SAYERS.

ON the following morning, Emily went early to the apartment of Madame Montoni, who had slept well, and was much recovered. Her spirits also had returned with her health, and her resolution to oppose Montoni's demands revived, though it yet struggled with her fears, which Emily, who trembled for the consequence of further opposition, endeavoured to confirm.

Her aunt, as has been already shewn, had a disposition, which delighted in contradiction, and which taught her, when unpleasant circumstances were offered to her understanding, not to inquire into their truth, but to seek for arguments, by which she might make them appear false. Long habit had so entirely confirmed this natural propensity, that she was not conscious of possessing it. Emily's remonstrances and representations, therefore roused her pride, instead of alarming, or convincing her judgment, and she still relied upon the discovery of some means, by which she might yet avoid submitting to the demand of her husband. Considering, that, if she could once escape from his castle, she might defy his power, and, obtaining a decisive separation, live in comfort on the estates, that yet remained for her, she mentioned this to her niece, who accorded with her in the wish, but differed from her as to the probability of its completion. She represented the impossibility of passing the gates, secured and guarded as they were, and the extreme danger of committing her design to the discretion of a servant, who might either purposely betray, or accidentally disclose it.—Montoni's vengeance would also disdain restraint, if her intention was detected; and, though Emily wished, as fervently as she could do, to regain her freedom, and return to France, she consulted only Madame Montoni's safety and persevered in advising her to relinquish her settlement, without braving further outrage.

The struggle of contrary emotions, however, continued to rage in her aunt's bosom, and she still brooded over the chance of effecting an escape. While she thus sat, Montoni entered the room, and, without noticing his wife's indisposition, said, that he came to remind her of the impolicy of trifling with him, and that he gave her only till the evening to determine, whether she would consent to his demand, or compel him, by a refusal, to remove her to the east turret. He added, that a party of cavaliers would dine with him, that day, and that he expected she would sit at the head of the table, where Emily, also, must be present. Madame Montoni was now on the point of uttering an absolute refusal, but, suddenly considering, that her liberty, during this entertainment, though circumscribed, might favour her further plans, she acquiesced with seeming reluctance, and Montoni, soon after left the apartment. His command struck Emily with surprise and apprehension, who shrunk from the thought of being exposed to the gaze of strangers, such as her fancy represented these to be, and the words of Count Morano, now again recollected, did not sooth her fears. When she withdrew to prepare for din-

ner, she dressed herself with even more simplicity than usual, that she might escape observation—a policy, which did not avail her, for, as she repassed to her aunt's apartment, she was met by Montoni, who censured what he called her prudish appearance, and insisted, that she would wear the most splendid dress she had, even that, which had been prepared for her intended nuptials with Count Morano, and which, it now appeared, her aunt had carefully brought with her from Venice. This was made, not in the Venetian, but, in the Neapolitan fashion, so as to set off the shape and figure, to the utmost advantage. In it, her beautiful chestnut tresses were negligently bound up in pearls, and suffered to fall back again on her neck. The simplicity of a better taste, than Madame Montoni's, was conspicuous in this dress, splendid as it was, and Emily's unaffected beauty never had appeared more captivately. She had now only to hope, that Montoni's order was prompted, not by any extraordinary design, but by an ostentation of displaying his family, richly attired, to the eyes of strangers; yet nothing less than his absolute command could have prevailed with her to wear a dress, that had been designed for such an offensive purpose, much less to have worn it on this occasion. As she descended to dinner, the emotion of her mind threw a faint blush over her countenance, and heightened its interesting expression; for timidity had made her linger in her apartment, till the utmost moment, and, when she entered the hall, in which a kind of state dinner was spread, Montoni and his guests were already seated at the table. She was then going to place herself by her aunt; but Montoni waved his hand, and two of the cavaliers rose, and seated her between them.

The eldest of these was a tall man, with strong Italian features, an aquiline nose, and dark penetrating eyes, that flashed with fire, when his mind was agitated, and even in its state of rest, retained somewhat of the wildness of the passions. His visage was long and narrow, and his complexion of a sickly yellow.

The other, who appeared to be about forty, had features of a different cast, yet Italian, and his look was slow, subtle and penetrating; his eyes, of a dark gray, were small, and hollow; his complexion was a sunburnt brown, and the cantour of his face, though inclined to oval, was irregular and ill-formed.

Eight other guests sat round the table, who were all dressed in an uniform, and had all an expression, more or less, of wild fierceness, of subtle design, or of licentious passions. As Emily timidly surveyed them, she remembered the scene of the preceding morning, and again almost fancied herself surrounded by

banditti; then, looking back to the tranquillity of her early life, she felt scarcely less astonishment, than grief, at her present situation. The scene, in which they sat, assisted the allusion; it was an ancient hall, gloomy from the style of its architecture, from its great extent, and because almost the only light it received was from one large gothic window, and from a pair of folding doors, which, being open, admitted likewise a view of the west rampart, with the wild mountains of the Apennine beyond.

The middle compartment of this hall rose into a vaulted roof, enriched with fret work, and supported, on three sides, by pillars of marble; beyond these, long colonades retired in gloomy grandeur, till their extent was lost in twilight. The lightest footsteps of the servants, as they advanced through these, were returning in whispering echoes, and their figures seen at a distance imperfectly through the dusk, frequently awakened Emily's imagination. She looked alternately at Montoni, at his guests and on the surrounding scene; and then, remembering her dear native province, her pleasant home and the simplicity and goodness of the friends, whom she had lost, grief and surprise again occupied her mind.

When her thoughts could return from these considerations, she fancied she observed an air of authority towards his guests, such as she never had before seen him assume, though he had always been distinguished by an haughty carriage; there was something also in the manners of the strangers, that seemed perfectly, though not servilely, to acknowledge his superiority.

During dinner, the conversation was chiefly on war and politics. They talked with energy of the state of Venice, its dangers, the character of the reigning Doge and of the chief senators; and then spoke of the state of Rome. When the repast was over, they rose, and, each filling his goblet with wine from the gilded ewer, that stood beside him, drank "Success to our exploits!" Montoni was lifting his goblet to his lips to drink this toast, when suddenly the wine hissed, rose to the brim, and, as he held the glass from him, it burst into a thousand pieces.

To him, who constantly used that sort of Venice glass, which had the quality of breaking, upon receiving poisoned liquor, a suspicion, that some of his guests had endeavoured to betray him, instantly occurred, and he ordered all the gates to be closed, drew his sword, and, looking round on them, who stood in silent amazement, exclaimed, "Here is a traitor among us; let those that are innocent, assist in discovering the guilty."

Indignation flashed from the eyes of the cavaliers, who all drew their swords; and Madame Montoni, terrified at what

might ensue, was hastening from the hall, when her husband commanded her to stay; but his further words could not now be distinguished, for the voice of every person rose together. His order, that all the servants should appear, was at length obeyed, and they declared their ignorance of any deceit—a protestation which could not be believed; for it was evident, that, as Montoni's liquor, and his only, had been poisoned, a deliberate design had been formed against his life, which could not have been carried so far towards its accomplishment, without the connivance of the servant, who had the care of the wine ewers.

This man, with another, whose face betrayed either the consciousness of guilt, or the fear of punishment, Montoni ordered to be chained instantly, and confined in a strong room, which had formerly been used as a prison. Thither, likewise, he would have sent all his guests, had he not foreseen the consequence of so bold and unjustifiable a proceeding. As to those, therefore, he contented himself with swearing, that no man should pass the gates, till this extraordinary affair had been investigated, and then sternly bade his wife retire to her apartment, whither he suffered Emily to attend her.

In about half an hour, he followed to the dressing room; and Emily observed, with horror, his dark countenance and quivering lip, and heard him denounce vengeance on her aunt.

"It will avail you nothing," said he to his wife, for a moment to deny the fact; I have proof of your guilt. Your only chance of mercy rests on a full confession;—there is nothing to hope from sullenness or falsehood; your accomplice has confessed all."

Emily's fainting spirits were roused by astonishment, as she heard her aunt accused of a crime so atrocious, and she could not admit the possibility of her guilt. Meanwhile Madame Montoni's agitation did not permit her to reply; alternately her complexion varied from livid paleness to a crimson flush; and she trembled,—but, whether with fear, or with indignation, it were difficult to decide.

"Spare your words," said Montoni, seeing her about to speak, "your countenance makes full confession of your crime.—You shall be instantly removed to the east turret."

"This accusation," said Madame Montoni, speaking with difficulty, "is used only as an excuse for your cruelty; I disclaim to reply to it. You do not believe me guilty."

"Signor!" said Emily solemnly, "this dreadful charge I would answer with my life, is false. Nay, Signor," she added, observing the severity of his countenance, "this is no moment

for restraint on my part ; I do not scruple to tell you, that you are deceived—most wickedly deceived, by the suggestion of some person, who aims at the ruin of my aunt : it is impossible, that you could yourself have imagined a crime so hideous.”

Montoni, his lips trembling more than before, replied only, “ If you value your own safety,” addressing Emily, “ you will be silent. I shall know how to interpret your remonstrances, should you persevere in them.”

Emily raised her eyes calmly to heaven. “ Here is, indeed, then, nothing to hope !” said she.

“ Peace !” cried Montoni, “ or you shall find there is something to fear.”

He turned to his wife, who had now recovered her spirits, and who vehemently and wildly remonstrated upon this mysterious suspicion : but Montoni's rage heightened with her indignation, and Emily, dreading the event of it, threw herself between them, and clasped his knees in silence, looking up in his face with an expression that might have softened the heart of a fiend.—Whether his was hardened by a conviction of Madame Montoni's guilt, or that a bare suspicion of it made him eager to exercise vengeance, he was totally and alike insensible to the distress of his wife, and to the pleading looks of Emily, whom he made no attempt to raise, but was vehemently menacing both, when he was called out of the room by some person at the door. As he shut the door, Emily heard him turn the lock and take out the key ; so that Madame Montoni and herself were now prisoners ; and she saw that his designs became more and more terrible.—Her endeavours to explain his motives for this circumstance were almost as ineffectual as those to soothe the distress of her aunt, whose innocence she could not doubt ; but she, at length, accounted for Montoni's readiness to suspect his wife by his own consciousness of cruelty towards her, and for the sudden violence of his present conduct against both, before even his suspicions could be completely formed, by his general eagerness to effect suddenly whatever he was led to desire and his carelessness of justice, or humanity, in accomplishing it.

Madame Montoni, after sometime, again looked round, in search of a possibility of escape from the castle, and conversed with Emily on the subject, who was now willing to encounter any hazard, though she forbore to encourage a hope in her aunt, which she herself did not admit. How strongly the edifice was secured, and how vigilantly guarded, she knew too well ; and trembled to commit their safety to the caprice of the servant,

whose assistance they must solicit. Old Carlo was compassionate, but he seemed to be too much in his master's interest to be trusted by them; Annette could of herself do little, and Emily knew Ludovico only from her report. At present, however, these considerations were useless, Madame Montoni and her niece being shut up from all intercourse, even with the persons, whom there might be these reasons to reject.

In the hall, confusion and tumult still reigned. Emily, as she listened anxiously to the murmur, that sounded along the gallery, sometimes fancied she heard the clashing of swords, and, when she considered the nature of the provocation, given by Montoni, and his impetuosity, it appeared probable, that nothing less than arms would terminate the contention. Madame Montoni having exhausted all her expressions of indignation, and Emily hers of comfort, they remained silent, in that kind of breathless stillness, which, in nature, often succeeds to the uproar of conflicting elements; a stillness, like the morning, that dawns upon the ruins of an earthquake.

An uncertain kind of terror pervaded Emily's mind; the circumstances of the past hour still came dimly and confusedly to her memory; and her thoughts were various and rapid, though without tumult.

From this state of waking visions she was recalled by a knocking at the chamber door, and inquiring who was there, heard the whispering voice of Annette.

"Dear madam, let me come in, I have a great deal to say," said the poor girl.

"The door is locked," answered her lady.

"Yes, ma'am, but do pray open it."

"The Signor has the key, said Madame Montoni."

"O blessed Virgin! what will become of us?" exclaimed Annette.

"Assist us to escape," said her mistress.

"Where is Ludovico?"

"Below in the hall, ma'am, amongst them all, fighting with the best of them!"

"Fighting! who are fighting!" cried Madame Montoni.

"Why the Signor, ma'am, and all the Signors, and a great many more."

"Is any person much hurt?" said Emily in a tremulous voice. "Hurt! Yes, ma'am, there they lie bleeding, and the swords are clashing, and—O holy saints! Do let me in, ma'am, they are coming this way—I shall be murdered!"

"Fly!" cried Emily, "fly! we cannot open the door."

Annette repeated, that they were coming, and in the same moment fled.

"Be calm, madam," said Emily, turning to her aunt. "I entreat you be calm, I am not frightened—not frightened in the least, do not you be alarmed."

"You can scarcely support yourself," replied her aunt; "Merciful God! what is it they mean to do with us?"

"They come perhaps to liberate us," said Emily, "Signor Montoni perhaps is—is conquered."

The belief of his death gave her spirits a sudden shock, and she grew faint as she saw him in imagination, expiring at her feet.

"They are coming!" cried Madame Montoni—"I hear their steps—they are at the door!"

Emily turned her languid eyes to the door, but terror deprived her of utterance. The key sounded in the lock; the door opened, and Montoni appeared, followed by three ruffian-like men. "Execute your orders," said he, turning to them, and pointing to his wife, who shrieked, but was immediately carried from the room; while Emily, sunk, senseless, on a couch, by which she had endeavoured to support herself. When she recovered, she was alone, and recollected only, that Madame Montoni had been there, together with some unconnected particulars of the preceding transaction, which were, however, sufficient to renew all her terror. She looked wildly round the apartment, as if in search of some means of intelligence, concerning her aunt, while neither her own danger, or an idea of escaping from the room, immediately occurred.

When her recollection was more complete, she raised herself and went, but with only a faint hope, to examine whether the door was unfastened. It was so, and she then stepped timidly out into the gallery, but paused there, uncertain which way she should proceed. Her first wish was to gather some information, as to her aunt, and she, at length, turned her steps to go to the lesser hall, where Annette and the other servants usually waited.

Every where, as she passed, she heard, from a distance, the uproar of contention, and the figures and faces, which she met, hurrying along the passages, struck her mind with dismay. Emily might now have appeared, like an angel of light, encompassed by fiends. At length, she reached the lesser hall, which was silent and deserted, but, panting for breath, she sat down to recover herself. The total stillness of this place was as awful as the tumult, from which she had escaped: but she had now time

to recall her scattered thoughts, to remember her personal danger, and to consider of some means of safety. She perceived, that it was useless to seek Madame Montoni, through the wide extent and intricacies of the castle, now, too, when every avenue seemed to be beset by ruffians ; in this hall she could not resolve to stay, for she knew not how soon it might become their place of rendezvous ; and, though she wished to go to her chamber, she dreaded again to encounter them on the way.

Thus she sat trembling and hesitating, when a distant murmur broke on the silence, and grew louder and louder, till she distinguished voices and steps approaching. She then rose to go, but the sounds came along the only passage, by which she could depart, and she was compelled to await in the hall, the arrival of the persons, whose steps she heard. As these advanced, she distinguished groans, and then saw a man borne slowly along by four others. Her spirits faltered at the sight, and she leaned against the wall for support. The bearers, meanwhile, entered the hall, and, being too busily occupied to detain, or even notice Emily, she attempted to leave it, but her strength failed, and she again sat down on the bench. A damp chillness came over her ; her sight became confused ; she knew not what had passed, or where she was, yet the groans of the wounded person still vibrated on her heart. In a few moments, the tide of life seemed again to flow ; she began to breathe more freely, and her senses revived. She had not fainted, nor had ever totally lost her consciousness, but had contrived to support herself on the bench ; still without courage to turn her eyes upon the unfortunate object, which remained near her, and about whom the men were yet too much engaged to attend to her.

When her strength returned, she rose, and was suffered to leave the hall, though her anxiety, having produced some vain inquiries concerning Madame Montoni, had thus made a discovery of herself. Towards her chamber she now hastened, as fast as her steps would bear her, for she still perceived, upon her passage, the sounds of confusion at a distance, and she endeavoured, by taking her way through some obscure rooms, to avoid encountering the persons, whose looks had terrified her before, as well as those parts of the castle, where the tumult still raged.

At length, she reached her chamber, and, having secured the door of the corridor, felt herself, for a moment, in safety. A profound stillness reigned in this remote apartment, which not even the faint murmur of the most distant sounds now reached. She sat down, near one of the casements, and, as she gazed on

the mountain view beyond, the deep repose of its beauty struck her with all the force of contrast, and she could scarcely believe herself so near a scene of savage discord. The contending elements seemed to have retired from their natural spheres, and to have collected themselves into the minds of men, for there alone the tempest now reigned.

Emily tried to tranquillize her spirits, but anxiety made her constantly listen for some sound, and often look out upon the ramparts, where all, however, was lonely and still. As a sense of her own immediate danger had decreased, her apprehension concerning Madame Montoni heightened, who, she remembered, had been fiercely threatened with confinement in the east turret, and it was possible, that her husband had satisfied his present vengeance with this punishment. She, therefore, determined, when night should return, and the inhabitants of the castle should be asleep, to explore the way to the turret, which, as the direction it stood in was mentioned, appeared not very difficult to be done. She knew, indeed, that although her aunt might be there, she could afford her no effectual assistance, but it might give her some comfort even to know, that she was discovered, and to hear the sound of her niece's voice; for herself, any certainty, concerning Madame Montoni's fate, appeared more tolerable than this exhausting suspense.

Meanwhile, Annette did not appear, and Emily was surprised, and somewhat alarmed for her, whom, in the confusion of the late scene, various accidents might have befallen, and it was improbable, that she would have failed to come to her apartment, unless something unfortunate had happened.

Thus the hours passed in solitude, in silence, and in anxious conjecturing. Being not once disturbed by a message, or a sound, it appeared, that Montoni had wholly forgotten her, and it gave her some comfort to find, that she could be so unnoticed. She endeavoured to withdraw her thoughts from the anxiety, that preyed upon them, but they refused control; she could neither read, or draw, and the tones of her lute were so utterly discordant with the present state of her feelings, that she could not endure them for a moment.

The sun, at length, set behind the western mountains; his fiery beams faded from the clouds, and then a dun melancholy purple drew over them, and gradually involved the features of the country below. Soon after, the sentinels passed on the rampart to commence the watch.

Twilight had now spread its gloom over every object ; the dismal obscurity of her chamber recalled fearful thoughts, but she remembered, that to procure a light she must pass through a great extent of the castle, and, above all, through the halls, where she had already experienced so much horror. Darkness, indeed, in the present state of her spirits, made silence and solitude terrible to her ; it would also prevent the possibility of her finding her way to the turret, and condemn her to remain in suspense, concerning the fate of her aunt ; yet she dared not to venture forth for a lamp.

Continuing at the casement, that she might catch the last lingering gleam of evening, a thousand vague images of fear floated on her fancy. "What if some of these ruffians," said she, "should find out the private staircase, and in the darkness of night steal into my chamber !" Then, recollecting the mysterious inhabitant of the neighbouring apartment, her terror changed its object. "He is not a prisoner," said she, "though he remains in one chamber, for Montoni did not fasten the door when he left it ; the unknown person himself did this ; it is certain, therefore, he can come out when he pleases."

She paused, for, notwithstanding the terrors of darkness, she considered it to be very improbable, whoever he was, that he could have any interest in intruding upon her retirement ; and again the subject of her emotion changed, when, remembering her nearness to the chamber, where the veil had formerly disclosed a dreadful spectacle, she doubted whether some passage might not communicate between it and the insecure door of the staircase.

It was now entirely dark, and she left the casement. As she sat with her eyes fixed on the hearth, she thought she perceived there a spark of light ; it twinkled and disappeared, and then again was visible. At length, with much care, she fanned the embers of a wood fire, that had been lighted in the morning, into flame, and having communicated it to a lamp, which always stood in her room, felt a satisfaction not to be conceived, without a review of her situation. Her first care was to guard the door of the staircase, for which purpose she placed against it all the furniture she could move, and she was thus employed, for sometime, at the end of which she had another instance how much more oppressive misfortune is to the idle, than to the busy ; for, having then leisure to think over all the circumstances of her present afflictions, she imagined a thousand evils for futurity, and these real and ideal subjects of distress alike wounded her mind.

Thus heavily moved the hours till midnight, when she counted the sullen notes of the great clock, as they rolled along the rampart, unmingled with any sound, except the distant footfall of a sentinel, who came to relieve guard. She now thought she might venture towards the turret, and, having gently opened the chamber door to examine the corridor, and to listen if any person was stirring in the castle, found all around in perfect stillness. Yet no sooner had she left the room, than she perceived a light flash on the walls of the corridor, and, without waiting to see by whom it was carried, she shrunk back, and closed her door. No one approaching, she conjectured, that it was Montoni going to pay his midnight visit to her unknown neighbour, and she determined to wait, till he should have retired to his own apartment.

When the chimes had tolled another half hour, she once more opened the door, and, perceiving that no person was in the corridor, hastily crossed into a passage, that led along the south side of the castle towards the staircase, whence she believed she could easily find her way to the turret. Often pausing on her way, listening apprehensively to the murmurs of the wind, and looking fearfully onward into the gloom of the long passages, she at length reached the staircase; but there her perplexity began. Two passages appeared, of which she knew not how to prefer one, and was compelled, at last to decide by chance, rather than by circumstances. That she entered, opened first into a wide gallery, along which she passed lightly and swiftly; for the lonely aspect of the place awed her, and she started at the echo of her own steps.

On a sudden, she thought she heard a voice, and, not distinguishing from whence it came, feared equally to proceed, or to return. For some moments, she stood in an attitude of listening expectation, shrinking almost from herself and scarcely daring to look round her. The voice came again, but, though it was now near her, terror did not allow her to judge exactly whence it proceeded. She thought, however, that it was the voice of complaint, and her belief was soon confirmed by a low moaning sound, that seemed to proceed from one of the chambers, opening into the gallery. It instantly occurred to her, that Madame Montoni might be there confined, and she advanced to the door to speak, but was checked by considering, that she was, perhaps, going to commit herself to a stranger, who might discover her to Montoni; for, though this person, whoever it was, seemed to be in affliction, it did not follow, that he was a prisoner.

While these thoughts passed over her mind, and left her still in hesitation, the voice spoke again, and, calling "Ludovico," she then perceived it to be that of Annette; on which, no longer hesitating, she went in joy to answer her.

"Ludovico!" cried Annette, sobbing—"Ludovico!"

"It is I," said Emily, trying to open the door. "How came you here? Who shut you up?"

"Ludovico!" repeated Annette—"O Ludovico!"

"It is not Ludovico, it is I—Mademoiselle Emily."

Annette ceased sobbing, and was silent.

"If you can open the door, let me in," said Emily, "here is no person to hurt you."

"Ludovico!—O, Ludovico!" cried Annette.

Emily now lost her patience, and, her fear of being overheard increasing, she was even nearly about to leave the door, when she considered, that Annette might, possibly, know something of the situation of Madame Montoni, or direct her to the turret.—At length, she obtained a reply, though little satisfactory to her questions, for Annette knew nothing of Madame Montoni, and only conjured Emily to tell her what was become of Ludovico. Of him she had no information to give, and she again asked who had shut Annette up.

"Ludovico," said the poor girl, "Ludovico shut me up.—When I ran away from the dressing room door to day, I went, I scarcely knew where, for safety; and, in this gallery, here, I met Ludovico, who hurried me into this chamber, and locked me up to keep me out of harm, as he said. But he was in such a hurry himself, he hardly spoke ten words, but he told me he would come, and let me out, when all was quiet, and he took away the key with him. Now all these hours are passed, and I have neither seen, or heard a word of him; they have murdered him—I know they have!"

Emily suddenly remembered the wounded person, whom she had seen borne into the servants' hall, and she scarcely doubted, that he was Ludovico, but she concealed the circumstance from Annette, and endeavoured to comfort her. Then, impatient to learn something of her aunt, she again inquired the way to the turret.

"O! you are not going, ma'amfelle," said Annette, "for Heaven's sake, do not go, and leave me here by myself."

"Nay, Annette, you do not think I can wait in the gallery all night," replied Emily. "Direct me to the turret; in the morning I will endeavour to release you."

"O holy Mary!" exclaimed Annette, "am I to stay here by myself all night! I shall be frightened out of my senses, and I shall die of hunger; I have had nothing to eat since dinner!"

Emily could scarcely forbear smiling at the heterogeneous distresses of Annette, though she sincerely pitied them, and said what she could to sooth her. At length, she obtained something like a direction to the east turret, and quitted the door, from whence, after many intricacies, and perplexities, she reached the steep and winding stairs of the turret, at the foot of which she stopped to rest, and to reanimate her courage with a sense of her duty. As she surveyed this dismal place, she perceived a door on the opposite side of the staircase, and, anxious to know whether it would lead her to Madame Montoni, she tried to undraw the bolts, which fastened it. A fresher air came to her face, as she unclosed the door, which opened upon the east rampart, and the sudden current had nearly extinguished her light, which she now removed to a distance; and again, looking out upon the obscure terrace, she perceived only the faint outline of the walls and of some towers, while, above, heavy clouds, borne along the wind, seemed to mingle with the stars, and wrap the night in thicker darkness. As she gazed, now willing to defer the moment of certainty, from which she expected only confirmation of evil, a distant footstep reminded her, that she might be observed by the men on watch; and, hastily closing the door, she took her lamp, and passed up the staircase. Trembling came upon her, as she ascended through the gloom. To her melancholy fancy this seemed to be a place of death, and the chilling silence, that reigned, confirmed its character. Her spirits faltered. "Perhaps," said she, "I am come hither only to learn a dreadful truth, or to witness some horrible spectacle; I feel that my senses would not survive such an addition of horror."

The image of her aunt murdered—murdered, perhaps, by the hand of Montoni, rose to her mind; she trembled, gasped for breath—repented that she had dared to venture hither, and checked her steps. But, after she had paused a few minutes, the consciousness of her duty returned, and she went on. Still all was silent. At length a track of blood, upon a stair, caught her eye; and instantly she perceived, that the wall and several other steps were stained. She paused, again struggled to support herself, and the lamp almost fell from her trembling hand.—Still no sound was heard, no living being seemed to inhabit the turret; a thousand times she wished herself again in her chamber; dreaded to inquire farther—dreaded to encounter some hor-

rible spectacle, and yet could not resolve, now that she was so near the termination of her efforts, to desist from them. Having again recollected courage to proceed, after ascending about half way up the turret, she came to another door, but here again she stopped in hesitation ; listened for sounds within, and then, summoning all her resolution, unclosed it, and entered a chamber, which, as her lamp shot its feeble rays through the darkness, seemed to exhibit only dew-stained and deserted walls. As she stood examining it, in fearful expectation of discovering the remains of her unfortunate aunt, she perceived something lying in an obscure corner of the room, and struck with an horrible conviction, she became, for an instant, motionless and nearly insensible. Then, with a kind of desperate resolution, she hurried towards the object that excited her terror, when, perceiving the clothes of some person, on the floor, she caught hold of them, and found in her grasp the old uniform of a soldier, beneath which appeared a heap of pikes and other arms. Scarcely daring to trust her sight, she continued, for some moments, to gaze on the object of her late alarm, and then left the chamber, so much comforted and occupied by the conviction, that her aunt was not there, that she was going to descend the turret, without inquiring farther ; when, on turning to do so, she observed upon some steps on the second flight an appearance of blood, and remembering, that there was yet another chamber to be explored, she again followed the windings of the ascent. Still, as she ascended, the track of blood glared upon the stairs.

It led her to the door of a landing place, that terminated them, but she was unable to follow it farther. Now that she was so near the sought-for certainty, she dreaded to know it, even more than before, and had not fortitude sufficient to speak, or to attempt opening the door.

Having listened in vain, for some sound, that might confirm or destroy her fears, she, at length, laid her hand on the lock, and, finding it fastened, called on Madame Montoni ; but only a chilling silence ensued.

"She is dead !" she cried,— "murdered !—her blood is on the stairs !"

Emily grew very faint ; could support herself no longer, and had scarcely presence of mind to set down the lamp, and place herself on a step.

When her recollection returned, she spoke again at the door, and again attempted to open it, and, having lingered for some time without receiving any answer, or hearing a sound, she de-

scended the turret, and, with all the swiftness her feebleness would permit sought her own apartment.

As she turned into the corridor, the door of a chamber opened, from whence Montoni came forth; but Emily, more terrified than ever to behold him, shrunk back into the passage soon enough to escape being noticed, and heard him close the door, which she had perceived was the same she formerly observed. Having here listened to his departing steps, till their faint sound was lost in distance, she ventured to her apartment, and, securing it once again, retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the hearth. But sleep was fled from her harassed mind, to which images of horror alone occurred. She endeavoured to think it possible, that Madame Montoni had not been taken to the turret; but, when she recollected the former menaces of her husband and the terrible spirit of vengeance, which he had displayed on the late occasion; when she remembered his general character, the looks of the men, who had forced Madame Montoni from her apartment, and the written traces on the stairs of the turret—she could not doubt, that her aunt had been carried thither, and could scarcely hope, that she had not been carried to be murdered.

The gray of morning had long dawned through her casements, before Emily closed her eyes in sleep; when wearied nature, at length, yielded her a respite from suffering.

C H A P. XXV.

“Who rears the bloody hand?”

SAYERS.

EMILY remained in her chamber, on the following morning, without receiving any notice from Montoni, or seeing a human being, except the armed men, who sometimes passed on the terrace below. Having tasted no food since the dinner of the preceding day, extreme faintness made her feel the necessity of quitting the asylum of her apartment to obtain refreshment, and she was also very anxious to procure liberty for Annette. Willing, however, to defer venturing forth, as long as possible, and considering, whether she should apply to Montoni, or to the com-

passion of some other person, her excessive anxiety concerning her aunt, at length, overcame her abhorrence of his presence, and she determined to go to him, and to entreat, that he would suffer her to see Madame Montoni.

Meanwhile, it was too certain, from the absence of Annette, that some accident had befallen Ludovico, and that she was still in confinement; Emily, therefore, resolved also to visit the chamber, where she had spoken to her, on the preceding night, and, if the poor girl was yet there, to inform Montoni of her situation.

It was near noon, before she ventured from her apartment, and went first to the south gallery, whither she passed without meeting a single person, or hearing a sound, except, now and then, the echo of a distant footstep.

It was unnecessary to call Annette, whose lamentations were audible upon the first approach to the gallery, and who, bewailing her own and Ludovico's fate, told Emily, that she should certainly be starved to death, if she was not let out immediately. Emily replied, that she was going to beg her release of Montoni; but the terrors of hunger now yielded to those of the Signor, and, when Emily left her, she was loudly entreating, that her place of refuge might be concealed from him.

As Emily drew near the great hall, the sounds she heard and the people she met in the passages renewed her alarm. The latter, however, were peaceable, and did not interrupt her, though they looked earnestly at her, as she passed, and sometimes spoke. On crossing the hall towards the cedar room, where Montoni usually sat, she perceived on the pavement, fragments of swords, some tattered garments stained with blood, and almost expected to have seen among them a dead body; but from such a spectacle she was, at present, spared. As she approached the room, the sound of several voices issued from within, and a dread of appearing before many strangers, as well as of irritating Montoni by such an intrusion, made her pause and falter from her purpose. She looked up through the long arcades of the hall, in search of a servant, who might bear a message, but no one appeared, and the urgency of what she had to request made her still linger near the door. The voices within were not in contention, though she distinguished those of several of the guests of the preceding day; but still her resolution failed, whenever she would have tapped at the door, and she had determined to walk in the hall, till some person should appear, who might call Montoni from the room, when, as she turned from the door, it was suddenly opened by

himself. Emily trembled, and was confused, while he almost started with surprise, and all the terrors of his countenance unfolded themselves. She forgot all she would have said, and neither inquired for her aunt, nor entreated for Annette, but stood silent and embarrassed.

After closing the door he reproved her for a meanness, of which she had not been guilty, and sternly questioned her what she had overheard; an accusation, which revived her recollection so far, that she assured him she had not come thither with an intention to listen to his conversation, but to entreat his compassion for her aunt, and for Annette. Montoni seemed to doubt this assertion, for he regarded her with a scrutinizing look; and the doubt evidently arose from no trifling interest. Emily then further explained herself, and concluded with entreating him to inform her, where her aunt was placed, and to permit, that she might visit her; but he looked upon her only with a malignant smile, which instantaneously confirmed her worst fears for her aunt, and, at that moment she had not courage to renew her entreaties.

"For Annette," said he,—“if you go to Carlo, he will release the girl; the foolish fellow, who shut her up, died yesterday.” Emily shuddered.—“But my aunt, Signor”—said she, “O tell me of my aunt!”

“She is taken care of,” replied Montoni hastily, “I have no time to answer idle questions.”

He would have passed on, but Emily, in a voice of agony, that could not be wholly resisted, conjured him to tell her, where Madame Montoni was; while he paused, and she anxiously watched his countenance, a trumpet sounded, and, in the next moment, she heard the heavy gates of the portal open, and then the clattering of horses' hoofs in the court, with the confusion of many voices. She stood for a moment hesitating whether she should follow Montoni, who, at the sound of the trumpet had passed through the hall, and, turning her eyes whence it came, she saw through the door, that opened beyond a long perspective of arches into the courts, a party of horsemen, whom she judged, as well as the distance and her embarrassment would allow, to be the same she had seen depart, a few days before. But she staid not to scrutinize, for, when the trumpet sounded again, the chevaliers rushed out of the cedar room, and men came running into the hall from every quarter of the castle. Emily once more hurried for shelter to her own apartment. Thither she was still pursued by images of horror. She reconsidered Montoni's man-

ner and words, when he had spoken of his wife, and they served only to confirm her most terrible suspicions. Tears refused any longer to relieve her distress, and she had sat for a considerable time absorbed in thought, when a knocking at the chamber door aroused her, on opening which she found old Carlo.

"Dear young lady," said he, "I have been so flurried, I never once thought of you till just now. I have brought you some fruit and wine, and I am sure you must stand in need of them by this time."

"Thank you Carlo," said Emily, "this is very good of you. Did the Signor remind you of me?"

"No, Signora," replied Carlo, "his *Excellenza* has business enough on his hands." Emily then renewed her inquiries, concerning Madame Montoni, but Carlo had been employed at the other end of the castle, during the time, that she was removed, and he had heard nothing since concerning her.

While he spoke, Emily looked steadily at him, for she scarcely knew whether he was really ignorant, or concealed his knowledge of the truth from a fear of offending his master. To several questions, concerning the contentions of yesterday, he gave very limited answers; but told, that the disputes were now amicably settled, and that the Signor believed himself to have been mistaken in his suspicions of his guests. "The fighting was about that, Signora," said Carlo; "but I trust I shall never see such another day in this castle, though strange things are about to be done."

On her inquiring his meaning, "Ah, Signora!" added he, "it is not for me to betray secrets, or tell all I think, but time will tell."

She then desired him to release Annette, and, having described the chamber in which the poor girl was confined, he promised to obey her immediately, and was departing, when she remembered to ask who were the persons just arrived. Her late conjecture was right; it was Verezzi with his party.

Her spirits were somewhat soothed by this short conversation with Carlo; for, in her present circumstances, it afforded some comfort to hear the accents of compassion, and to meet the look of sympathy.

An hour passed before Annette appeared, who then came weeping and sobbing. "O Ludovico—Ludovico!" cried she.

"My poor Annette!" said Emily, and made her sit down.

"Who could have foreseen this, ma'amfelle? O miserable, wretched, day—that ever I should live to see it!" and she con-

tinued to moan and lament, till Emily thought it necessary to check her excess of grief. "We are continually losing dear friends by death," said she with a sigh, that came from her heart. "We must submit to the will of Heaven—our tears, alas! cannot recall the dead!"

Annette took the handkerchief from her face.

"You will meet Ludovico in a better world, I hope," added Emily.

"Yes—yes,—ma'amfelle," sobbed Annette, "but I hope I shall meet him again in this—though he is so wounded!"

"Wounded!" exclaimed Emily, "does he live?"

"Yes, ma'am, but—but he has a terrible wound, and could not come to let me out. They thought him dead, at first, and he has not been rightly himself, till within this hour."

"Well, Annette, I rejoice to hear he lives."

"Lives! Holy Saints! why he will not die, surely!"

Emily said she hoped not, but this expression of hope Annette thought implied fear, and her own increased in proportion, as Emily endeavoured to encourage her. To inquiries concerning Madame Montoni, she could give no satisfactory answers.

"I quite forgot to ask among the servants, ma'amfelle," said she, "for I could think of nobody but poor Ludovico."

Annette's grief was now somewhat assuaged, and Emily sent her to make inquiries, concerning her lady, of whom, however, she could obtain no intelligence, some of the people she spoke with being really ignorant of her fate, and others having probably received orders to conceal it.

This day passed with Emily in continued grief and anxiety for her aunt; but she was unmolested by any notice from Montoni; and, now that Annette was liberated she obtained food without exposing herself to danger, or impertinence.

Two following days passed in the same manner, unmarked by any occurrence, during which she obtained no information of Madame Montoni. On the evening of the second, having dismissed Annette, and retired to bed, her mind became haunted by the most dismal images, such as her long anxiety, concerning her aunt suggested; and, unable to forget herself for a moment, or to vanquish the phantoms that tormented her, she rose from her bed, and went to one of the casements of her chamber, to breathe a freer air.

All without was silent and dark, unless that could be called light, which was only the faint glimmer of the stars, shewing imperfectly the outline of the mountains, the western towers of

the castle and the ramparts below, where a solitary sentinel was pacing. What an image of repose did this scene present ! The fierce and terrible passions, too, which so often agitated the inhabitants of this edifice, seemed now hushed in sleep ; those mysterious workings, that rouse the elements of man's nature into tempest—were calm. Emily's heart was not so ; but her sufferings, though deep, partook of the gentle character of her mind. Hers was a silent anguish, weeping, yet enduring, not the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers of reason and living in a world of its own.

The air refreshed her, and she continued at the casement, looking on the shadowy scene, over which the planets burned with a clear light, amid the deep blue æther, as they silently moved in their destined course. She remembered how often she had gazed on them with her dear father, how often he had pointed out their way in the heavens, and explained their laws ; and these reflections led to others, which, in an almost equal degree, awakened her grief and astonishment.

They brought a retrospect of all the strange and mournful events, which had occurred since she lived in peace with her parents. And to Emily, who had been so tenderly educated, so tenderly loved, who once knew only goodness and happiness—to her, the late events and her present situation—in a foreign land—in a remote castle—surrounded by vice and violence—seemed more like the visions of a distempered imagination, than the circumstances of truth. She wept to think of what her parents would have suffered, could they have foreseen the events of her future life.

While she raised her streaming eyes to heaven, she observed the same plannet, which she had seen in Languedoc, on the night, preceding her father's death, rise above the eastern towers of the castle, while she remembered the conversation which had passed, concerning the probable state of departed souls ; remembered, also, the solemn music she had heard, and to which the tenderness of her spirits had, in spite of her reason, given a superstitious meaning. At these recollections she wept again, and continued musing, when suddenly the notes of sweet music passed on the air. A superstitious dread stole over her ; she stood listening, for some moments, in trembling expectation, and then endeavoured to recollect her thoughts, and to reason herself into composure ; but human reason cannot establish her laws on subjects, lost in the obscurity of imagination, any more than the eye can ascertain the form of objects, that only glimmer through the dimness of night.

Her surprise, on hearing such soothing and delicious sounds, was, at least, justifiable ; for it was long—very long, since she had listened to any thing like melody. The fierce trumpet and the shrill fife were the only instruments she had heard, since her arrival, at Udolpho.

When her mind was somewhat more composed, she tried to ascertain from what quarter the sounds proceeded, and thought they came from below ; but whether from a room of the castle, or from the terrace, she could not with certainty judge. Fear and surprise now yielded to the enchantment of a strain, that floated on the silent night, with the most soft and melancholy sweetness. Suddenly, it seemed removed to a distance, trembled faintly, and then entirely ceased.

She continued to listen, sunk in that pleasing repose, which soft music leaves on the mind—but it came no more. Upon this strange circumstance her thoughts were long engaged, for strange it certainly was to hear music at midnight, when every inhabitant of the castle had long since retired to rest, and in a place, where nothing like harmony had been heard before, probably, for many years. Long suffering had made her spirits peculiarly sensible to terror, and liable to be affected by the illusions of superstition. It now seemed to her, as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain, to inspire her with comfort and confidence, on the subject, which had then occupied her mind. Yet reason told her, that this was a wild conjecture, and she was inclined to dismiss it ; but, with the inconsistency so natural, when imagination guides the thoughts, she then wavered towards a belief as wild. She remembered the singular event, connected with the castle, which had given it into the possession of its present owner ; and, when she considered the mysterious manner, in which its late possessor had disappeared, and that she had never since been heard of, her mind was impressed with an high degree of solemn awe ; so that, though there appeared no clue to connect that event with the late music, she was inclined fancifully to think they had some relation to each other. At this conjecture, a sudden chillness ran through her frame ; she looked fearfully upon the duskiness of her chamber, and the dead silence, that prevailed there, heightened to her fancy its gloomy aspect.

At length, she left the casement, but her steps faltered, as she approached the bed, and she stopped and looked round. The single lamp, that burned in her spacious chamber, was expiring ; for a moment, she shrunk from the darkness beyond ; and then, ashamed of the weakness, which, however, she could not wholly

conquer, went forward to the bed, where her mind did not soon know the soothing of sleep. She still mused on the late occurrence, and looked with anxiety to the next night, when, at the same hour, she determined to watch whether the music returned. "If those sounds were human," said she, "I shall probably hear them again."

C H A P. XXVI.

"Then, oh, you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience; and, in ripen'd time,
Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up
In countenance."

SHAKESPEARE.

ANNETTE came almost breathless to Emily's apartment in the morning. "O ma'amselle!" said she, in broken sentences, "what news I have to tell! I have found out who the prisoner is—but he was no prisoner, neither;—he that was shut up in the chamber I told you of. I must think him a ghost, forsooth!"

"Who was the prisoner?" inquired Emily, while her thoughts glanced back to the circumstance of the preceding night.

"You mistake, ma'am," said Annette; "he was not a prisoner, after all."

"Who is the person then?"

"Holy Saints!" rejoined Annette; "How I was surprised! I met him just now, on the rampart below, there. I never was so surprised in my life! Ah! ma'amselle! this is a strange place! I should never have done wondering, if I was to live here an hundred years. But, as I was saying, I met him just now on the rampart, and I was thinking of nobody less than of him."

"This trifling is insupportable," said Emily; "prythee, Annette, do not torture my patience any longer."

"Nay, ma'amselle, guess—guess who it was; it was somebody you know very well."

"I cannot guess," said Emily impatiently.

"Nay, ma'amselle, I'll tell you something to guess by—A tall Signor with a longish face, who walks so stately, and used to wear such a high feather in his hat; and used often to look down upon the ground, when people spoke to him; and to look at people from under his eye brows, as it were, all so dark and

frowning. You have seen him, often and often, at Venice, ma'am. Then he was so intimate with the Signor, too. And, now I think of it, I wonder what he could be afraid of in this lonely old castle, that he should shut himself up for. But he is come abroad now, for I met him on the rampart just this minute. I trembled when I saw him, for I always was afraid of him, somehow; but I determined I would not let him see it; so I went up to him, and made him a low curtesy, 'You are welcome to the castle, Signor Orsino,' said I."

"O, it was Signor Orsino, then!" said Emily.

"Yes, ma'amfelle, Signor Orsino, himself, who caused that Venetian gentleman to be killed, and has been popping about from place to place, ever since, as I hear."

"Good God!" exclaimed Emily, recovering from the shock of this intelligence; "and is *he* come to Udolpho! He does well to endeavour to conceal himself."

"Yes, ma'amfelle, but if that was all, this desolate place would conceal him, without his shutting himself up in one room. Who would think of coming to look for him here? I am sure I should as soon think of going to look for any body in the other world."

"There is some truth in that," said Emily, who would now have concluded it was Orsino's music, which she had heard, on the preceding night, had she not known, that he had neither taste, or skill in the art. But, though she was unwilling to add to the number of Annette's surprises, by mentioning the subject of her own, she inquired, whether any person in the castle played on a musical instrument?

"O yes, ma'amfelle there is Benedetto plays the great drum to admiration; and then, there is Launcelot the trumpeter; nay, for that matter, Ludovico himself can play on the trumpet;—but he is ill now. I remember once"—

Emily interrupted her; "Have you heard no other music since you came to the castle—none last night?"

"Why, did *you* hear any last night, ma'amfelle?"

Emily evaded this question, by repeating her own.

"Why, no, ma'am," replied Annette; "I never heard any music here, I must say, but the drums and the trumpet; and, as for last night, I did nothing but dream I saw my late lady's ghost."

"Your *late*, lady's," said Emily in a tremulous voice; "you have heard more, then. Tell me—tell me all, Annette, I entreat; tell me the worst at once."

"Nay, ma'amfelle, you know the worst already."

"I know nothing," said Emily.

"Yes, you do, ma'amselle; you know, that nobody knows any thing about her; and it is plain, therefore, she is gone, the way of the first lady of the castle—nobody ever knew any thing about her."

Emily leaned her head upon her hand, and was, for sometime, silent; then, telling Annette she wished to be alone, the latter left the room.

The remark of Annette had revived Emily's terrible suspicion concerning the fate of Madame Montoni; and she resolved to make another effort to obtain certainty on this subject, by applying to Montoni once more.

When Annette returned a few hours after, she told Emily, that the porter of the castle wished very much to speak with her, for that he had something of importance to say; her spirits had, however, of late been so subject to alarm, that any new circumstance excited it; and this message from the porter, when her first surprise was over, made her look round for some lurking danger, the more suspiciously, perhaps, because she had frequently remarked the unpleasant air and countenance of this man. She now hesitated, whether to speak with him, doubting even, that this request was only a pretext to draw her into some danger; but a little reflection shewed her the improbability of this, and she blushed at her weak fears.

"I will speak to him, Annette," said she; "desire him to come to the corridor immediately."

Annette departed, and soon after returned.

"Barnardine, ma'amselle," said she, "dare not come to the corridor, lest he should be discovered, it is so far from his post; and he dare not even leave the gates for a moment now; but, if you will come to him at the portal, through some roundabout passages he told me of, without crossing the courts, he has that to tell, which will surprise you. But you must not come through the courts, lest the Signor should see you."

Emily, neither approving these "roundabout passages," nor the other part of the request, now positively refused to go. "Tell him," said she, "if he has any thing of consequence to impart, I will hear him in the corridor, whenever he has an opportunity of coming thither."

Annette went to deliver this message, and was absent a considerable time. When she returned, "It won't do, ma'amselle," said she. "Barnardine has been considering all this time what can be done, for it is as much as his place is worth to leave his

post now. But, if you will come to the east rampart in the dusk of the evening, he can, perhaps, steal away, and tell you all he has to say."

Emily was surprised and alarmed, at the secrecy which this man seemed to think so necessary, and hesitated whether to meet him, till, considering, that he might mean to warn her of some serious danger, she resolved to go.

"Soon after sunset," said she, "I will be at the end of the east rampart. But then the watch will be set," she added, recollecting herself, "and how can Barnardine pass unobserved?"

"That is just what I said to him, ma'am, and he answered me, that he had the key of the gate, at the end of the rampart, that leads towards the courts, and could let himself through that way; and as for the sentinels, there were none at this end of the terrace, because the place is guarded enough by the high walls of the castle, and the east turret; and he said those at the other end were too far off to see him, if it was pretty duskyish."

"Well," said Emily, "I must hear what he has to tell; and, therefore, desire you will go with me to the terrace, this evening."

"He desired it might be pretty duskyish, ma'amfelle," repeated Annette, "because of the watch."

Emily paused, and then said she would be on the terrace, an hour after sunset; "and tell Barnardine," she added, "to be punctual to the time; for that I, also, may be observed by Signor Montoni. Where is the Signor? I would speak with him."

"He is in the cedar chamber, ma'am, counselling with the other Signors. He is going to give them a sort of a treat to-day, to make up for what passed at the last, I suppose; the people are all very busy in the kitchen."

Emily now inquired, if Montoni expected any new guests? and Annette believed that he did not. "Poor Ludovico!" added she, "he would be as merry as the best of them, if he was well; but he may recover yet. Count Morano was wounded as bad, as he, and he has got well again, and is gone back to Venice."

"Is he so?" said Emily, "when did you hear this?"

"I heard it, last night, ma'amfelle, but I forgot to tell it."

Emily asked some further questions, and then, desiring Annette would observe and inform her, when Montoni was alone, the girl went to deliver her message to Barnardine.

Montoni was, however, so much engaged, during the whole day, that Emily had no opportunity of seeking a release from her terrible suspense, concerning her aunt. Annette was employed in watching his steps, and in attending upon Ludovico, whom

she, assisted by Caterina, nursed with the utmost care ; and Emily was, of course, left much alone. Her thoughts dwelt often on the message of the porter, and were employed in conjecturing the subject, that occasioned it, which she sometimes imagined concerned the fate of Madame Montoni ; at others, that it related to some personal danger, which threatened herself. The cautious secrecy which Barnardine observed in his conduct, inclined her to believe the latter.

As the hour of appointment drew near, her impatience increased. At length, the sun set ; she heard the passing steps of the sentinels going to their posts ; and waited only for Annette to accompany her to the terrace, who, soon after, came, and they descended together. When Emily expressed apprehensions of meeting Montoni, or some of his guests, " O, there is no fear of that, ma'amfelle," said Annette, " they are all set in to feasting yet, and that Barnardine knows."

They reached the first terrace, where the sentinels demanded who passed ; and Emily, having answered, walked on to the east rampart, at the entrance of which they were again stopped ; and, having again replied, were permitted to proceed. But Emily did not like to expose herself to the discretion of these men, at such an hour ; and, impatient to withdraw from the situation, she stepped hastily on in search of Barnardine. He was not yet come. She leaned pensively on the wall of the rampart, and waited for him. The gloom of twilight sat deep on the surrounding objects, blending in soft confusion the valley, the mountains and the woods, whose tall heads, stirred by the evening breeze, gave the only sounds, that stole on silence, except a faint, faint chorus of distant voices, that arose from within the castle.

" What voices are those ?" said Emily, as she fearfully listened.

" It is only the Signor and his guests carousing," replied Annette.

" Good God !" thought Emily, " can this man's heart be so gay, when he has made another being so wretched ; if, indeed, my aunt is yet suffered to feel her wretchedness ?" O ! whatever are my own sufferings, may my heart never, never be hardened against those of others !"

She looked up, with a sensation of horror, to the east turret, near which she then stood ! a light glimmered through the grates of the lower chamber, but those of the upper one were dark. Presently, she perceived a person moving with a lamp across the lower room ; but this circumstance revived no hope, concerning Madame Montoni, whom she had vainly sought in

that apartment, which had appeared to contain only soldiers' accoutrements. Emily, however, determined to attempt the outer door of the turret, as soon as Barnardine should withdraw; and, if it was unfastened, to make another effort to discover her aunt.

The moments passed, but still Barnardine did not appear; and Emily, becoming uneasy, hesitated whether to wait any longer. She would have sent Annette to the portal to hasten him, but feared to be left alone, for it was now almost dark, and a melancholy streak of red, that still lingered in the west, was the only vestige of departed day. The strong interest, however, which Barnardine's message had awakened, overcame other apprehensions, and still detained her.

While she was conjecturing with Annette what could thus occasion his absence, they heard a key turn in the lock of the gate near them, and presently saw a man advancing. It was Barnardine, of whom Emily hastily inquired what he had to communicate, and desired, that he would tell her quickly, "for I am chilled with this evening air," said she.

"You must dismiss your maid, lady," said the man in a voice, the deep tone of which shocked her, "what I have to tell is to you only."

Emily, after some hesitation, desired Annette to withdraw to a little distance. "Now, my friend, what would you say?"

He was silent a moment, as if considering, and then said,—

"That which would cost me my place, at least, if it came to the Signor's ears. You must promise, lady, that nothing shall ever make you tell a syllable of the matter; I have been trusted in this affair, and, if it was known, that I betrayed my trust, my life, perhaps, might answer it. But I was concerned for you, lady, and I resolved to tell you." He paused.—

Emily thanked him, assured him that he might repose on her discretion, and entreated him to dispatch.

"Annette told us in the hall how unhappy you was about Signora Montoni, and how much you wished to know what was become of her."

"Most true," said Emily eagerly, "and you can inform me. I conjure you tell me the worst, without hesitation." She rested her trembling arm upon the wall.

"I can tell you," said Barnardine, and paused.—

Emily had no power to enforce her entreaties.

"I *can* tell you," resumed Barnardine,—"but"—

"But what?" exclaimed Emily, recovering her resolution.

"Here I am, ma'amelle," said Annette, who, having heard

the eager tone, in which Emily pronounced these words, came running towards her.

"Retire!" said Barnardine, sternly, "you are not wanted;" and, as Emily said nothing, Annette obeyed.

"I *can* tell you," repeated the porter.—"but I know not how, you was afflicted before."——

"I am prepared for the worst, my friend," said Emily, in a firm and solemn voice. "I can support any certainty better than this suspense."

"Well, Signora, if that is the case, you shall hear.—You know, I suppose, that the Signor and his lady used sometimes to disagree. It is none of my concerns to inquire what it was about, but I believe you know it was so."

"Well," said Emily, "proceed."

"The Signor, it seems, had lately been very wrath against her. I saw all, and heard all,—a great deal more than people thought for; but it was none of my business, so I said nothing. A few days ago, the Signor sent for me. 'Barnardine,' says he, 'you are—an honest man, I think I can trust you.'—I assured his *Excellenza* that he could. 'Then,' says he, as near as I can remember, 'I have an affair in hand, which I want you to assist me in.'—Then he told me what I was to do; but that I shall say nothing about—it concerned only the Signora."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Emily——"what have you done?"

Barnardine hesitated, and was silent.

"What fiend could tempt him, or you, to such an act!" cried Emily, chilled with horror, and scarcely able to support her fainting spirits.

"It was a fiend," said Barnardine in a gloomy tone of voice. They were now both silent;—Emily had not courage to inquire further, and Barnardine seemed to shrink from telling more. At length he said, "It is of no use to think of the past; the Signor was cruel enough, but he would be obeyed. What signified my refusing? He would have found others, who had no scruples."

"You have murdered her, then!" said Emily, in a hallow and inward voice—"I am talking with a murderer!" Barnardine stood silent; while Emily turned from him, and attempted to leave the place.

"Stay, lady!" said he "you deserve to think so still—since you can believe me capable of such a deed."

"If you are innocent, tell me quickly," said Emily, in faint accents, "for I feel I shall not be able to hear you long."

"I will tell you no more," said he, and walked away. Emily had just strength enough to bid him stay, and then to call Annette, on whose arm she leaned, and they walked slowly up the rampart, till they heard steps behind them. It was Barnardine again.

"Send away the girl," said he, "and I will tell you more."

"She must not go" said Emily; "what you have to say she may hear."

"May she so, lady?" said he. "You shall know no more, then;" and he was going, though slowly, when Emily's anxiety, overcoming the resentment and fear, which the man's behaviour had roused, she desired him to stay, and bade Annette retire.

"The Signora is alive," said he, "for me. She is my prisoner, though; his *Excellenza* has shut her up in the chamber over the great gates of the court, and I have the charge of her. I was going to have told you, you might see her—but now——"

Emily, relieved from an unutterable load of anguish by this speech, had now only to ask Barnardine's forgiveness, and to conjure, that he would let her visit her aunt.

He complied with less reluctance, than she expected, and told her, that, if she would repair, on the following night, when the Signor was retired to rest, to the postern gate of the castle, she should, perhaps, see Madame Montoni.

Amid all the thankfulness, which Emily felt for this concession, she thought she observed a malicious triumph in his manner, when he pronounced the last words; but, in the next moment, she dismissed the thought, and, having again thanked him, commended her aunt to his pity, and assured him, that she would herself reward him, and would be punctual to her appointment; she bade him good night, and retired, unobserved, to her chamber. It was a considerable time, before the tumult of joy, which Barnardine's unexpected intelligence had occasioned, allowed Emily to think with clearness, or to be conscious of the real dangers, that still surrounded Madame Montoni and herself. When this agitation subsided, she perceived, that her aunt was yet the prisoner of a man, to whose vengeance, or avarice, she might fall a sacrifice; and, when she further considered the savage aspect of the person who was appointed to guard Madame Montoni, her doom appeared to be already sealed, for the countenance of Barnardine seemed to bear the stamp of a murderer; and, when she had looked upon it, she felt inclined to believe, that there was no deed, however black, which he

might not be prevailed upon to execute. These reflections brought to her remembrance the tone of voice, in which he had promised to grant her request to see his prisoner; and she mused upon it long in uneasiness and doubt. Sometimes, she even hesitated, whether to trust herself with him at the lonely hour he had appointed; and once, and only once, it struck her, that Madame Montoni might be already murdered, and that this ruffian was appointed to decoy herself to some secret place, where her life also was to be sacrificed to the avarice of Montoni, who then would claim securely the contested estates in Languedoc. The consideration of the enormity of such guilt did, at length, relieve her from the belief of its probability, but not from all the doubts and fears, which a recollection of Barnardine's manner had occasioned. From these subjects, her thoughts, at length, passed to others; and, as the evening advanced, she remembered, with somewhat more than surprise, the music she had heard, on the preceding night, and now awaited its return, with more than curiosity.

She distinguished, till a late hour, the distant carousals of Montoni and his companions—the loud contest, the dissolute laugh and the choral song, that made the halls re-echo. At length, she heard the heavy gates of the castle shut for the night, and those sounds instantly sunk into a silence, which was disturbed only by the whispering steps of persons, passing through the galleries to their remote rooms. Emily now judging it to be about the time, when she had heard the music, on the preceding night, dismissed Annette, and gently opened the casement to watch for its return. The planet she had so particularly noticed, at the recurrence of the music, was not yet risen; but, with superstitious weakness, she kept her eyes fixed on that part of the hemisphere, where it would rise, almost expecting, that, when it appeared, the sounds would return. At length, it came, serenely bright, over the eastern towers of the castle. Her heart trembled, when she perceived it, and she had scarcely courage to remain at the casement, lest the returning music should confirm her terror, and subdue the little strength she yet retained. The clock soon after struck one, and, knowing this to be about the time, when the sounds had occurred, she sat down in a chair, near the casement, and endeavoured to compose her spirits; but the anxiety of expectation yet disturbed them. Every thing, however, remained still; she heard only the solitary step of a sentinel, and the lulling murmur of the woods below, and she again leaned from the casement, and again looked, as if for intelligence, to the planet, which was now risen high above the towers.

Emily continued to listen, but no music came. "Those were surely no mortal sounds!" said she, recollecting their entrancing melody. "No inhabitant of this castle could utter such; and, where is the feeling, that could modulate such exquisite expression? We all know, that it has been affirmed celestial sounds have sometimes been heard on earth. Father Pierre and father Antonie declared, that they had sometimes heard them in the stillness of the night, when they alone were walking to offer their orisons to heaven. Nay, my dear father himself, once said, that, soon after my mother's death, as he lay watchful in grief, sounds of uncommon sweetness called him from his bed; and, on opening his window, he heard lofty music pass along the midnight air. It soothed him, he said; he looked up with confidence to heaven, and resigned her to his God."

Emily paused to weep at this recollection. "Perhaps," resumed she, "perhaps, those strains I heard were sent to comfort, to encourage me! Never shall I forget those I heard, at this hour, in Languedoc! Perhaps, my father watches over me, at this moment!" She wept again in tenderness. Thus passed the hour in watchfulness and solemn thought; but no sounds returned; and, after remaining at the casement, till the light tint of dawn began to edge the mountain tops and steal upon the the night shade, she concluded, that they would not return, and retired reluctantly to repose.

CHAP. XXVII.

"I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o'the time,
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night."

MACBETH.

EMILY was somewhat surprised, on the following day, to find that Annette had heard of Madame Montoni's confinement in the chamber over the portal, as well as of her purposed visit there, on the approaching night. That the circumstance, which Barnardine had so solemnly enjoined her to conceal, he had himself told to so indiscreet an hearer as Annette, appeared very improbable, though he had now charged her with a message, concerning the intended interview. He requested, that Emily

would meet him, unattended, on the terrace, at a little after midnight, when he himself would lead her to the place he had promised ; a proposal from which she immediately shrunk, for a thousand vague fears darted athwart her mind, such as had tormented her on the preceding night, and which she neither knew how to trust, or to dismiss. It frequently occurred to her, that Barnardine might have deceived her, concerning Madame Montoni, whose murderer, perhaps, he really was ; and that he had deceived her by order of Montoni, the more easily to draw her into some of the desperate designs of the latter. The terrible suspicion that Madame Montoni no longer lived, thus came, accompanied by one not less dreadful for herself. Unless the crime by which the aunt had suffered, was instigated merely by resentment, unconnected with profit, a motive, upon which Montoni did not appear very likely to act, its object must be unattained, till the niece was also dead, to whom Montoni knew that his wife's estates must descend. Emily remembered the words, which had informed her, that the contested estates in France would devolve to her, if Madame Montoni died, without consigning them to her husband, and the former obstinate perseverance of her aunt made it too probable, that she had, to the last, withheld them. At this instant, recollecting Barnardine's manner, on the preceding night, she now believed, what she had then fancied, that it expressed malignant triumph. She shuddered at the recollection, which confirmed her fears, and determined not to meet him on the terrace. Soon after, she was inclined to consider these suspicions as the extravagant exaggerations of a timid and harassed mind, and could not believe Montoni liable to such preposterous depravity as that of destroying, from one motive, his wife and her niece. She blamed herself for suffering her romantic imagination to carry her so far beyond the bounds of probability, and determined to endeavour to check its rapid flights, lest they should sometimes extend into madness. Still, however, she shrunk from the thought of meeting Barnardine, on the terrace, at midnight ; and still the wish to be relieved from this terrible suspense, concerning her aunt, to see her, and to sooth her sufferings, made her hesitate what to do.

" Yet how is it possible, Annette, I can pass to the terrace at that hour ?" said she, recollecting herself, " the sentinels will stop me, and Signor Montoni will hear of the affair."

" O ma'amfelle ! that is well thought of," replied Annette.—
 " That is what Barnardine told me about. He gave me this key, and bade me say it unlocks the door at the end of the vault-

ed gallery, that opens near the end of the east rampart, so that you need not pass any of the men on watch. He bade me say, too, that his reason for requesting you to come to the terrace was, because he could take you to the place you want to go to, without opening the great doors of the hall, which grate so heavily."

Emily's spirits were somewhat calmed by this explanation, which seemed to be honestly given to Annette. "But why did he desire I would come alone, Annette?" said she.

"Why that was what I asked him myself, ma'amfelle. Says I, Why is my young lady to come alone?—Surely I may come with her!—What harm can I do? But he said 'No—no—I tell you not,' in his gruff way. Nay, says I, I have been trusted in as great affairs as this, I warrant, and it's a hard matter if I can't keep a secret now. Still he would say nothing but—'No—no—no.' Well, says I, if you will only trust me, I will tell you a great secret, that was told me a month ago, and I have never opened my lips about it yet—so you need not be afraid of telling me. But all would not do. Then, ma'amfelle, I went so far as to offer him a beautiful new sequin that Ludovico gave me for a keep sake, and I would not have parted with it for all St. Marco's Place; but even that would not do! Now what can be the reason of this? But I know, you know, ma'am, who you are going to see."

"Pray did Barnardine tell you this?"

"He! No ma'amfelle, that he did not."

Emily inquired who did, but Annette shewed, that she *could* keep a secret.

During the remainder of the day, Emily's mind was agitated with doubts and fears and contrary determinations, on the subject of meeting this Barnardine on the rampart, and submitting herself to his guidance, she scarcely knew whither. Pity for her aunt and anxiety for herself alternately swayed her determination, and night came, before she had decided upon her conduct. She heard the castle clock strike eleven—twelve—and yet her mind wavered. The time, however, was now come, when she could hesitate no longer: and then the interest she felt for her aunt overcame other considerations, and, bidding Annette follow her to the outer door of the vaulted gallery, and there await her return, she descended from her chamber. The castle was perfectly still, and the great hall, where so lately she had witnessed a scene of dreadful contention, now returned only the whispering footsteps of the two solitary figures gliding fearfully between the pillars, and gleamed only to the feeble lamp they

carried Emily, deceived by the long shadows of the pillars and by the catching lights between, often stopped, imagining she saw some person, moving in the distant obscurity of the perspective; and, as she passed these pillars, she feared to turn her eyes toward them, almost expecting to see a figure start out from behind their broad shaft. She reached, however, the vaulted gallery, without interruption, but unclosed its outer door with a trembling hand, and, charging Annette not to quit it and to keep it a little open, that she might be heard if she called, she delivered to her the lamp, which she did not dare to take herself because of the men on watch, and, alone stepped out upon the dark terrace. Every thing was so still, that she feared, lest her own light steps should be heard by the distant sentinels, and she walked cautiously towards the spot where she had before met Barnardine, listening for a sound, and looking onward through the gloom in search of him. At length, she was startled by a deep voice, that spoke near her, and she paused, uncertain whether it was his, till it spoke again, and she then recognized the hollow tones of Barnardine, who had been punctual to the moment, and was at the appointed place, resting on the rampart wall. After chiding her for not coming sooner, and saying, that he had been waiting nearly half an hour, he desired Emily, who made no reply, to follow him to the door, through which he had entered the terrace.

While he unlocked it, she looked back to that she had left, and, observing the rays of the lamp stream through a small opening, was certain, that Annette was still there. But her remote situation could little befriend Emily, after she had quitted the terrace; and, when Barnardine unclosed the gate, the dismal aspect of the passage beyond, shewn by a torch burning on the pavement, made her shrink from following him alone, and she refused to go, unless Annette might accompany her. This, however, Barnardine absolutely refused to permit, mingling at the same time with his refusal such artful circumstances to heighten the pity and curiosity of Emily towards her aunt, that she, at length, consented to follow him alone to the portal.

He then took up the torch, and led her along the passage, at the extremity of which he unlocked another door, whence they descended, a few steps, into a chapel, which, as Barnardine held up the torch to light her, Emily observed to be in ruins, and she immediately recollected a former conversation of Annette, concerning it, with very unpleasant emotions. She looked fearfully on the almost roofless walls, green with damps, and on the

gothic points of the windows, where the ivy and the briony had long supplied the place of glass, and ran mantling among the broken capitals of some columns, that had once supported the roof. Barnardine stumbled over the broken pavement, and his voice, as he uttered a sudden oath, was returned in hallow echoes, that made it more terrific. Emily's heart sunk; but she still followed him, and he turned out of what had been the principal aisle of the chapel. "Down these steps, lady," said Barnardine, as he descended a flight, which appeared to lead into the vaults; but Emily paused on the top, and demanded, in a tremulous tone, whither he was conducting her.

"To the portal," said Barnardine.

"Cannot we go through the chapel to the portal?" said Emily.

"No, Signora, that leads to the inner court, which I don't choose to unlock. This way, and we shall reach the outer court presently."

Emily still hesitated; fearing not only to go on, but, since she had gone thus far, to irritate Barnardine by refusing to go further.

"Come, lady," said the man, who had nearly reached the bottom of the flight, "make a little haste; I cannot wait here all night."

"Whither do these steps lead?" said Emily, yet pausing.

"To the portal," repeated Barnardine, in an angry tone, "I will wait no longer." As he said this, he moved on with the light, and Emily, fearing to provoke him by further delay, reluctantly followed. From the steps, they proceeded through a passage, adjoining the vaults, the walls of which were dropping with unwholesome dews, and the vapours, that crept along the ground, made the torch burn so dimly, that Emily expected every moment to see it extinguished, and Barnardine could scarcely find his way. As they advanced, these vapours thickened, and Barnardine, believing the torch was expiring, stopped for a moment to trim it. As he then rested against a pair of iron gates, that opened from the passage, Emily saw, by uncertain flashes of light, the vaults beyond, and near her, heaps of earth, that seemed to surround an open grave. Such an object, in such a scene, would, at any time, have disturbed her; but now she was shocked by an instantaneous presentiment, that this was the grave of her unfortunate aunt, and that the treacherous Barnardine was leading herself to destruction. The obscure and terrible place, to which he had conducted her, seemed to justify the thought; it was a place suited for murder, a receptacle for

the dead, where a deed of horror might be committed, and no vestige appear to proclaim it. Emily was so overwhelmed with terror, that, for a moment, she was unable to determine what conduct to pursue. She then considered, that it would be vain to attempt an escape from Barnardine, by flight, since the length and the intricacy of the way she had passed would soon enable him to overtake her, who was unacquainted with the turnings, and whose feebleness would not suffer her to run long with swiftness. She feared equally to irritate him by a disclosure of her suspicions, which a refusal to accompany him further certainly would do; and, since she was already as much in his power as it was possible she could be, if she proceeded, she, at length, determined to suppress, as far as she could, the appearance of apprehension, and to follow silently whither he designed to lead her. Pale with horror and anxiety, she now waited till Barnardine had trimmed the torch, and, as her sight glanced again upon the grave, she could not forbear inquiring, for whom it was prepared. He took his eyes from the torch, and fixed them upon her face without speaking. She faintly repeated the question, but the man, shaking the torch, passed on; and she followed, trembling to a second flight of steps, having ascended which, a door delivered them into the first court of the castle. As they crossed it, the light shewed the high black walls around them, fringed with long grass and dank weeds, that found a scanty soil among the mouldering stones; the heavy buttresses, with, here and there, between them, a narrow gate, that admitted a freer circulation of air to the court, the massy iron gates, that led to the castle, whose clustering turrets appeared above, and, opposite, the huge towers and arch of the portal itself. In this scene the large, uncouth person of Barnardine, bearing the torch, formed a characteristic figure. This Barnardine was wrapt in a long dark cloak, which scarcely allowed the kind of half-boots, or sandals, that were laced upon his legs to appear, and shewed only the point of a broad sword, which he usually wore slung in a belt across his shoulders. On his head was a heavy flat velvet cap, somewhat resembling a turban, in which was a short feather; the visage beneath it shewed strong features, and a countenance furrowed with the lines of cunning and darkened by habitual discontent.

The view of the court, however, reanimated Emily, who, as she crossed silently towards the portal, began to hope, that her own fears and not the treachery of Barnardine, had deceived her. She looked anxiously up at the first casement, that appeared above

the lofty arch of the portcullis; but it was dark, and she inquired whether it belonged to the chamber, where Madame Montoni was confined. Emily spoke low, and Barnardine, perhaps, did not hear her question, for he returned no answer; and they, soon after, entered the postern door of the gateway, which brought them to the foot of a narrow staircase, that wound up one of the towers.

"Up this staircase the Signora lies," said Barnardine.

"Lies!" repeated Emily faintly, as she began to ascend.

"She lies in the upper chamber," said Barnardine.

As they passed up, the wind, which poured through the narrow cavities in the wall, made the torch flare, and it threw a stronger gleam upon the grim and fallow countenance of Barnardine, and discovered more fully the desolation of the place—the rough stone walls, the spiral stairs, black with age, and a suit of ancient armour, with an iron visor, that hung upon the walls, and appeared a trophy of some former victory.

Having reached a landing place, "You may wait here, lady," said he, applying a key to the door of a chamber, "while I go up, and tell the Signora you are coming."

"That ceremony is unnecessary," replied Emily, "my aunt will rejoice to see me."

"I am not so sure of that," said Barnardine, pointing to the room he had opened: "Come in here, lady, while I step up."

Emily, surprised and somewhat shocked, did not dare to oppose him further, but, as he was turning away with the torch, desired he would not leave her in darkness. He looked around, and, observing a tripod lamp, that stood on the stairs, lighted and gave it to Emily, who stepped forward into a large old chamber, and he closed the door. As she listened anxiously to his departing steps, she thought he descended, instead of ascending, the stairs; but the gusts of wind that whistled round the portal, would not allow her to hear distinctly any other sound. Still, however, she listened, and, perceiving no step in the room above, where he had affirmed Madame Montoni to be, her anxiety increased, though she considered, that the thickness of the floor in this strong building might prevent any sound reaching her from the upper chamber. The next moment, in a pause of the wind, she distinguished Barnardine's step descending to the court, and then thought she heard his voice; but, the rising gust again overcoming other sounds, Emily, to be certain on this point, moved softly to the door, which, on attempting to open it, she discovered was fastened. All the horrid apprehensions, that had

lately assailed her, returned at this instant with redoubled force, and no longer appeared like the exaggerations of a timid spirit, but seemed to have been sent to warn her of her fate. She now did not doubt, that Madame Montoni had been murdered, perhaps in this very chamber; or that she herself was brought hither for the same purpose. The countenance, the manners and the recollected words of Barnardine, when he had spoken of her aunt, confirmed her worst fears. For some moments, she was incapable of considering of any means, by which she might attempt an escape. Still she listened, but heard footsteps neither on the stairs, or in the room above; she thought, however, that she again distinguished Barnardine's voice below, and went to a grated window, that opened upon the court, to inquire further. Here, she plainly heard his hoarse accents, mingling with the blast that swept by, but they were lost again so quickly, that their meaning could not be interpreted; and then the light of a torch, which seemed to issue from the portal below, flashed across the court, and the long shadow of a man, who was under the archway, appeared upon the pavement. Emily, from the hugeness of this sudden portrait, concluded it to be that of Barnardine; but other deep tones, which passed in the wind, soon convinced her that he was not alone, and that his companion was not a person very liable to pity.

When her spirits had overcome the first shock of her situation, she held up the lamp to examine, if the chamber afforded a possibility of an escape. It was a spacious room, whose walls, wainscoted with rough oak, shewed no casement but the grated one, which Emily had left, and no other door than that, by which she had entered. The feeble rays of the lamp, however, did not allow her to see at once its full extent; she perceived no furniture, except, indeed, an iron chair, fastened in the centre of the chamber, immediately over which, depending on a chain from the ceiling, hung an iron ring. Having gazed upon these, for some time, with wonder and horror, she next observed iron bars below, made for the purpose of confining the feet, and on the arms of the chair were rings of the same metal. As she continued to survey them, she concluded, that they were instruments of torture, and it struck her, that some poor wretch had once been fastened in this chair, and had there been starved to death. She was chilled by the thought; but, what was her agony, when, in the next moment, it occurred to her, that her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next! An acute pain seized her head, she was scarcely able to hold the

lamp, and, looking round for support, was seating herself, unconsciously, in the iron chair itself; but suddenly perceiving where she was, she started from it in horror, and sprung towards a remote end of the room. Here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceived only a dark curtain, which, descending from the cieling to the floor, was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it, in wonder and apprehension.

It seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled, twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring hand had formerly unveiled in an apartment of the castle, till, suddenly conjecturing, that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt, she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside. Beyond, appeared a corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the floor beneath.

The features deformed by death, were ghastly and horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch.

When her senses returned, she found herself surrounded by men, among whom was Barnardine, who were lifting her from the floor, and then bore her along the chamber. She was sensible of what passed, but the extreme languor of her spirits did not permit her to speak, or move, or even to feel any distinct fear. They carried her down the staircase, by which she had ascended; when, having reached the archway, they stopped, and one of the men, taking the torch from Barnardine, opened a small door, that was cut in the great gate, and, as he stepped out upon the road, the light he bore shewed several men on horseback, in waiting. Whether it was the freshness of the air, that revived Emily, or that the objects she now saw roused the spirit of alarm, she suddenly spoke, and made an ineffectual effort to disengage herself from the grasp of the ruffians, who held her.

Barnardine, meanwhile, called loudly for the torch, while distant voices answered, and several persons approached, and, in the same instant, a light flashed upon the court of the castle. Again he vociferated for the torch, and the men hurried Emily through the gate. At a short distance, under the shelter of the castle walls, she perceived the fellow, who had taken the light from the porter, holding it to a man, busily employed in altering the saddle

of a horse, round which were several horsemen, looking on, whose harsh features received the full glare of the torch ; while the broken ground beneath them, the opposite walls, with the tufted shrubs, that overhung their summits, and an embattled watch tower above, were reddened with the gleam, which, fading gradually away, left the remoter ramparts, and the woods below to the obscurity of night.

"What do you waste time for, there ?" said Barnardine with an oath, as he approached the horsemen. "Dispatch—dispatch."

"The saddle will be ready in a minute," replied the man who was buckling it, at whom Barnardine now swore again, for his negligence, and Emily calling feebly for help, was hurried towards the horses, while the ruffians disputed on which to place her, the one designed for her not being ready. At this moment a cluster of lights issued from the great gates, and she immediately heard the shrill voice of Annette above those of several other persons, who advanced. In the same moment, she distinguished Montoni and Cavigni, followed by a number of ruffian-faced fellows, to whom she no longer looked with terror, but with hope, for, at this instant, she did not tremble at the thought of any dangers, that might await her within the castle—whence so lately, and so anxiously she had wished to escape. Those, which threatened her from without, had engrossed all her apprehensions.

A short contest ensued between the parties, in which that of Montoni, however, were presently victors, and the horsemen, perceiving, that numbers were against them, and being, perhaps, not very warmly interested in the affair they had undertaken, galloped off, while Barnardine had run far enough to be lost in the darkness, and Emily was led back into the castle. As she re-passed the courts, the remembrance of what she had seen in the portal chamber came, with all its horror, to her mind ; and when, soon after, she heard the gate close, that shut her once more within the castle walls, she shuddered for herself, and, almost forgetting the danger she had escaped, could scarcely think, that any thing less precious than liberty and peace was to be found beyond them.

Montoni ordered Emily to await him in the cedar parlour, whither he soon followed, and then sternly questioned her on this mysterious affair. Though she now viewed him with horror, as the murderer of her aunt, and scarcely knew what she said in reply to his impatient inquiries, her answers and her manner convinced him, that she had not taken a voluntary part in the late

scheme, and he dismissed her upon the appearance of his servants whom he had ordered to attend that he might inquire further into the affair, and discover those, who had been accomplices in it.

Emily had been sometime in her apartment, before the tumult of her mind allowed her to remember several of the passed circumstances. Then, again, the dead form, which the curtain in the portal chamber had disclosed, came to her fancy, and she uttered a groan, which terrified Annette the more, as Emily forbore to satisfy her curiosity, on the subject of it, for she feared to trust her with so fatal a secret, lest her indiscretion should call down the immediate vengeance of Montoni on herself.

Thus compelled to bear within her own mind the whole horror of the secret, that oppressed it, her reason seemed to totter under the intolerable weight. She often fixed a wild and vacant look on Annette, and, when she spoke, either did not hear her, or answered from the purpose. Long fits of abstraction succeeded; Annette spoke repeatedly, but her voice seemed not to make any impression on the sense of the long agitated Emily, who sat fixed and silent, except that, now and then, she heaved a heavy sigh, but without tears.

Terrified at her condition, Annette, at length left the room, to inform Montoni of it, who had just dismissed his servants without having made any discoveries on the subject of his inquiry. The wild description, which this girl now gave of Emily, induced him to follow her immediately to the chamber.

At the sound of his voice, Emily turned her eyes, and a gleam of recollection seemed to shoot athwart her mind, for she immediately rose from her seat, and moved slowly to a remote part of the room. He spoke to her in accents somewhat softened from their usual harshness, but she regarded him with a kind of half curious, half terrified look, and answered only "yes," to whatever he said. Her mind still seemed to retain no other impression than that of fear.

Of this disorder Annette could give no explanation, and Montoni, having attempted, for sometime, to persuade Emily to talk, retired, after ordering Annette to remain with her, during the night, and to inform him, in the morning of her condition.

When he was gone, Emily again came forward, and asked who it was, that had been there to disturb her. Annette said it was the Signor—Signor Montoni. Emily repeated the name after her, several times, as if she did not recollect it, and then suddenly groaned, and relapsed into abstraction.

With some difficulty, Annette led her to the bed, which Emily examined with an eager, frenzied eye, before she lay down, and then, pointing, turned with shuddering emotion, to Annette, who, now more terrified, went towards the door, that she might bring one of the female servants to pass the night with them; but Emily, observing her going, called her by name, and then in the naturally soft and plaintive tone of her voice, begged, that she, too, would not forsake her.—“For, since my father died,” added she, sighing, “every body forsakes me.”

“Your father, ma’amfelle!” said Annette, “he was dead before you knew me.”

“He was, indeed!” rejoined Emily, and her tears began to flow. She now wept silently and long, after which, becoming quite calm, she at length sunk to sleep, Annette having had discretion enough not to interrupt her tears. This, girl as affectionate as she was simple, lost in these moments all her former fears of remaining in the chamber, and watched alone by Emily, during the whole night.

C H A P. XXVIII.

“unfold

What worlds, or what vast regions, hold
Th’ immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook!”

IL PENSEROSO.

EMILY’s mind was refreshed by sleep. On waking in the morning, she looked with surprise on Annette who sat sleeping in a chair beside the bed, and then endeavoured to recollect herself; but the circumstances of the preceding night were swept from her memory, which seemed to retain no trace of what had passed, and she was still gazing with surprise on Annette, when the latter awoke.

“O dear ma’amfelle! do you know me?” cried she.

“Know you! Certainly,” replied Emily, “you are Annette; but why are you sitting by me thus?”

“O you have been very ill, ma’amfelle, very ill indeed! and I am sure I thought—”

“This is very strange!” said Emily, still trying to recollect the past.—“But I think I do remember, that my fancy has been haunted by frightful dreams. Good God!” she added, suddenly starting—“surely it was nothing more than a dream!”

She fixed a terrified look upon Annette, who, intending to quiet her, said "Yes, ma'amfelle, it was more than a dream, but it is all over now."

"She *is* murdered, then!" said Emily in an inward voice, and shuddering instantaneously. Annette screamed; for, being ignorant of the circumstance to which Emily referred, she attributed her manner to a disordered fancy; but, when she had explained to what her own speech alluded, Emily, recollecting the attempt that had been made to carry her off, asked if the contriver of it had been discovered. Annette replied, that he had not, though he might easily be guessed at; and then told Emily she might thank her for her deliverance, who, endeavouring to command the emotion, which the remembrance of her aunt had occasioned, appeared calmly to listen to Annette, though, in truth, she heard scarcely a word that was said.

"And so, ma'amfelle," continued the latter, "I was determined to be even with Barnardine for refusing to tell me the secret, by finding it out myself; so I watched you, on the terrace, and, as soon as he had opened the door at the end, I stole out from the castle, to try to follow you; for, says I, I am sure no good can be planned, or why all this secrecy? So, sure enough, he had not bolted the door after him, and, when I opened it, I saw, by the glimmer of the torch, at the other end of the passage, which way you were going. I followed the light, at a distance, till you came to the vaults of the chapel, and there I was afraid to go further, for I had heard strange things about these vaults. But then, again, I was afraid to go back, all in darkness, by myself; so by the time Barnardine had trimmed the light, I had resolved to follow you, and I did so, till you came to the great court, and there I was afraid he would see me; so I stopped at the door again, and watched you across to the gates, and, when you was gone up the stairs, I whipt after. There, as I stood under the gateway, I heard horses' feet without, and several men talking; and I heard them swearing at Barnardine for not bringing you out, and just then, he had like to have caught me, for he came down the stairs again, and I had hardly time to get out of his way. But I had heard enough of his secret now, and I determined to be even with him, and to save you, too, ma'amfelle, for I guessed it to be some new scheme of Count Morano, though he was gone away. I ran into the castle, but I had hard work to find my way through the passage under the chapel, and what is very strange, I quite forgot to look for the ghosts they had told me about, though I would not go into that place again by

myself for all the world ! Luckily the Signor and Signor Cavigni were up, so we had soon a train at our heels, sufficient to frighten that Barnardine and his rogues, all together."

Annette ceased to speak, but Emily still appeared to listen. At length she said, suddenly, " I think I will go to him myself ; where is he ? "

Annette asked who was meant.

" Signor Montoni," replied Emily. " I would speak with him ; " and Annette, now remembering the order he had given, on the preceding night, respecting her young lady, rose, and said she would seek him herself.

This honest girl's suspicions of Count Morano were perfectly just ; Emily, too when she thought on the scheme, had attributed it to him ; and Montoni, who had not a doubt on this subject, also, began to believe, that it was by the direction of Morano that poison had formerly been mingled with his wine.

The professions of repentance, which Morano had made to Emily, under the anguish of his wound, were sincere at the moment he offered them ; but he had mistaken the subject of his sorrow, for, while he thought he was condemning the cruelty of his late design, he was lamenting only the state of suffering, to which it had reduced him. As these sufferings abated, his former views revived, till, his health being re-established, he again found himself ready for enterprise and difficulty. The porter of the castle, who had served him on a former occasion, willingly accepted a second bribe ; and, having concerted the means of drawing Emily to the gates, Morano publicly left the hamlet, whither he had been carried after the affray, and withdrew with his people to another at several miles distance. From thence, on a night agreed upon by Barnardine, who had discovered from the thoughtless prattle of Annette, the most probable means of decoying Emily, the Count sent back his servants to the castle, while he awaited her arrival at the hamlet, with an intention of carrying her immediately to Venice. How this, his second scheme, was frustrated, has already appeared ; but the violent, and various passions with which this Italian lover was now agitated, on his return to that city, can only be imagined.

Annette having made her report to Montoni, of Emily's health and of her request to see him, he replied, that she might attend him in the cedar room, in about an hour. It was on the subject, that pressed so heavily on her mind, that Emily wished to speak to him, yet she did not distinctly know what good purpose this could answer, and sometimes she even recoiled in horror from

the expectation of his presence. She wished, also, to petition, though she scarcely dared to believe the request would be granted, that he would permit her, since her aunt was no more, to return to her native country.

As the moment of interview approached, her agitation increased so much, that she almost resolved to excuse herself under what could scarcely be called a pretence of illness; and, when she considered what could be said, either concerning herself, or the fate of her aunt, she was equally hopeless as to the event of her entreaty, and terrified as to its effect upon the vengeful spirit of Montoni. Yet, to pretend ignorance of her death, appeared in some degree, to be sharing its criminality, and, indeed, this event was the only ground, on which Emily could rest her petition for leaving Udolpho.

While her thoughts thus wavered, a message was brought, importing, that Montoni could not see her, till the next day; and her spirits were then relieved, for a moment, from an almost intolerable weight of apprehension. Annette said, she fancied the Chevaliers were going out to the wars again, for the courtyard was filled with horses, and she heard, that the rest of the party, who went out before, were expected at the castle. "And I heard one of the soldiers, too," added she, "say to his comrade, that he would warrant they'd bring home a rare deal of booty.—So, thinks I, if the Signor can, with a safe conscience, send his people out a robbing—why it is no business of mine. I only wish I was once safe out of this castle; and, if it had not been for poor Ludovico's sake, I would have let Count Morano's people run away with us both, for it would have been serving you a good turn, ma'amfelle, as well as myself."

Annette might have continued thus talking for hours for any interruption she would have received from Emily, who was silent, inattentive, absorbed in thought, and passed the whole of this day in a kind of solemn tranquillity, such as is often the result of faculties overstrained by suffering.

When night returned, Emily recollected the mysterious strains of music, that she had lately heard in which she still felt some degree of interest, and of which she hoped to hear again the soothing sweetness. The influence of superstition now gained on the weakness of her long harassed mind; she looked, with enthusiastic expectation, to the guardian spirit of her father, and, having dismissed Annette for the night, determined to watch alone for their return. It was not yet, however, near the time when she had heard the music on a former night, and anxious to call off

her thoughts from distressing subjects, she sat down with one of the few books, that she had brought from France ; but her mind, refusing control, became restless and agitated, and she went often to the casement to listen for a sound. Once, she thought she heard a voice, but then, every thing without the casement remaining still, she concluded, that her fancy had deceived her.

Thus passed the time, till twelve o'clock, soon after which the distant sounds that murmured through the castle, ceased, and sleep seemed to reign over all. Emily then seated herself at the casement, where she was soon recalled from the reverie, into which she sunk, by very unusual sounds, not of music, but like the low mourning of some person in distress. As she listened, her heart faltered in terror, and she became convinced, that the former sound was more than imaginary. Still, at intervals, she heard a kind of feeble lamentation, and sought to discover whence it came. There were several rooms underneath, adjoining the rampart, which had been long shut up, and, as the sound probably rose from one of these, she leaned from the casement to observe, whether any light was visible there. The chambers, as far as she could perceive, were quite dark, but, at a little distance, on the rampart below, she thot' she saw something moving.

The faint twilight, which the stars shed, did not enable her to distinguish what it was ; but she judged it to be a sentinel, on watch, and she removed her light to a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice, during her further observation.

The same object still appeared. Presently, it advanced along the rampart, towards her window, and she then distinguished something like a human form, but the silence, with which it moved, convinced her it was no sentinel. As it drew near, she hesitated whether to retire ; a thrilling curiosity inclined her to stay, but a dread of the scarcely knew what warned her to withdraw.

While she paused, the figure came opposite to her casement, and was stationary. Every thing remained quiet ; she had not heard even a footfall ; and the solemnity of this silence, with the mysterious form she saw, subdued her spirits, so that she was moving from the casement, when on a sudden, she observed the figure start away, and glide down the rampart, after which it was soon lost in the obscurity of night. Emily continued to gaze, for sometime, on the way it had passed, and then retired within her chamber, musing on this strange circumstance, and scarcely doubting that she had witnessed a supernatural appearance.

When her spirits recovered composure, she looked round for some other explanation. Remembering what she had heard of the daring enterprises of Montoni, it occurred to her, that she

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had just seen some unhappy person, who, having been plundered by his banditti, was brought hither a captive ; and that the music she had formerly heard, came from him. Yet, if they had plundered him, it still appeared improbable, that they should have brought him to the castle, and it was also more consistent with the manners of banditti to murder those they rob, than to make them prisoners. But what, more than any other circumstance, contradicted the supposition, that it was a prisoner, was that it wandered on the terrace, without a guard : a consideration, which made her dismiss immediately her first surmise.

Afterwards, she was inclined to believe, that Count Morano had obtained admittance into the castle ; but she soon recollected the difficulties and dangers, that must have opposed such an enterprise, and that, if he had so far succeeded, to come alone and in silence to her casement at midnight was not the conduct he would have adopted, particularly since the private staircase, communicating with her apartment, was known to him ; neither would he have uttered the dismal sounds she had heard.

Another suggestion represented, that this might be some person who had designs upon the castle ; but the mournful sounds destroyed, also that probability. Thus, inquiry only perplexed her. Who, or what, it could be that haunted this lonely hour, complaining in such doleful accents and in such sweet music (for she was still inclined to believe, that the former strains and the late appearance were connected) she had no means of ascertaining ; and imagination again assumed her empire, and roused the mysteries of superstition.

She determined, however, to watch on the following night, when her doubts might, perhaps, be cleared up ; and she almost resolved to address the figure, if it should appear again.

C H A P. XXIX.

“ Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering, and sitting by a new made grave.”

MILTON.

ON the following day, Montoni sent a second excuse to Emily, who was surprised at the circumstance. “ This is very strange !” said she to herself. “ His conscience tells him the purport of my visit, and he defers it, to avoid an explanation.” She now almost resolved to throw herself in his way, but terror

checked the intention, and this day passed, as the preceding one, with Emily, except that a degree of awful expectation, concerning the approaching night, now somewhat disturbed the dreadful calmness that had pervaded her mind.

Towards evening, the second part of the band, which had made the first excursion among the mountains, returned to the castle, where, as they entered the courts, Emily, in her remote chamber, heard their loud shouts and strains of exultation, like the orgies of furies over some horrid sacrifice. She even feared they were about to commit some barbarous deed; a conjecture from which, however, Annette soon relieved her, by telling, that the people were only exulting over the plunder they had brought with them. This circumstance still further confirmed her in the belief, that Montoni had really commenced to be a captain of banditti, and meant to retrieve his broken fortunes by the plunder of travellers! Indeed, when she considered all the circumstances of his situation—in an armed, and almost inaccessible castle, retired far among the recesses of wild and solitary mountains, along whose distant skirts were scattered towns, and cities, whither wealthy travellers were continually passing—this appeared to be the situation of all others most suited for the success of schemes of rapine, and she yielded to the strange thought, that Montoni was become a captain of robbers. His character also, unprincipled, dauntless, cruel and enterprising, seemed to fit him for the situation. Delighting in the tumult and in the struggles of life, he was equally a stranger to pity and to fear; his very courage was a sort of animal ferocity; not the noble impulse of a principle, such as inspirits the mind against the oppressor, in the cause of the oppressed; but a constitutional hardness of nerve, that cannot feel, and that, therefore, cannot fear.

Emily's supposition, however natural, was in part erroneous, for she was a stranger to the state of this country and to the circumstances, under which its frequent wars were partly conducted. The revenues of the many states of Italy being, at that time, insufficient to the support of standing armies, even during the short periods, which the turbulent habits both of the governments and the people permitted to pass in peace, an order of men arose not known in our age, and but faintly described in the history of their own. Of the soldiers, disbanded at the end of every war, few returned to the safe, but unprofitable occupations, then usual in peace. Sometimes they passed into other countries, and mingled with armies, which still kept the field. Sometimes they formed themselves into bands of robbers, and occupied remote

fortresses, where their desperate character, the weakness of the governments which they offended, and the certainty that they could be recalled to the armies, when their presence should be again wanted, prevented them from being much pursued by the civil power; and, sometimes, they attached themselves to the fortunes of a popular chief, by whom they were led into the service of any state, which could settle with him the price of their valour. From this latter practice arose their name—*Condottieri*; a term formidable all over Italy, for a period, which concluded in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, but of which it is not so easy to ascertain the commencement.

Contests between the smaller states were then, for the most part, affairs of enterprise alone, and the probabilities of success were estimated, not from the skill, but from the personal courage of the general, and the soldiers. The ability, which was necessary to the conduct of tedious operations, was little valued. It was enough to know how a party might be led towards their enemies, with the greatest secrecy, or conducted from them in the compactest order. The officer was to precipitate himself into a situation, where, but for his example, the soldiers might not have ventured; and, as the opposite parties knew little of each other's strength, the event of the day was frequently determined by the boldness of the first movements. In such services the *Condottieri* were eminent, and in these, where plunder always followed success, their characters acquired a mixture of intrepidity and profligacy, which awed even those whom they served.

When they were not thus engaged, their chief had usually his own fortress, in which, or in its neighbourhood, they enjoyed an irksome rest; and, though their wants were, at one time, partly supplied from the property of the inhabitants, the lavish distribution of their plunder at others, prevented them from being obnoxious; and the peasants of such districts gradually shared the character of their warlike visitors. The neighbouring governments sometimes professed, but seldom endeavoured, to suppress these military communities; both because it was difficult to do so, and because a disguised protection of them ensured, for the service of their wars, a body of men, who could not otherwise be so cheaply maintained, or so perfectly qualified. The commanders sometimes even relied so far upon this policy of the several powers, as to frequent their capitals; and Montoni, having met them in the gaming parties of Venice and Padua, conceived a desire to emulate their characters, before his ruined fortunes tempted him to adopt their practices. It was for the arrange-

ment of his present plan of life, that the midnight councils were held at his mansion in Venice, and at which Orsino and some other members of the present community then assisted with suggestions, which they had since executed with the wreck of their fortunes.

On the return of night, Emily resumed her station at the casement. There was now a moon ; and, as it rose over the tufted woods, its yellow light served to shew the lonely terrace and the surrounding objects, more distinctly, than the twilight of the stars had done, and promised Emily to assist her observations, should the mysterious form return. On this subject, she again wavered in conjecture, and hesitated whether to speak to the figure, to which a strong and almost irresistible interest urged her ; but terror, at intervals, made her reluctant to do so.

"If this is a person who has designs upon the castle," said she, "my curiosity may prove fatal to me ; yet the mysterious music, and the lamentations I heard, must surely have proceeded from him : if so, he cannot be an enemy."

She then thought of her unfortunate aunt, and, shuddering with grief and horror, the suggestions of imagination seized her mind with all the force of truth, and she believed, that the form she had seen was supernatural. She trembled, breathed with difficulty, an icy coldness touched her cheeks, and her fears for a while overcame her judgment. Her resolution now forsook her, and she determined, if the figure should appear, not to speak to it.

Thus the time passed, as she sat at her casement, awed by expectation, and by the gloom and stillness of midnight ; for she saw obscurely in the moonlight only the mountains and woods, a cluster of towers, that formed the west angle of the castle, and the terrace below ; and heard no sound, except now and then, the lonely watchword, passed by the sentinels on duty, and afterwards the steps of the men who came to relieve guard, and whom she knew at a distance on the rampart by their pikes, that glittered in the moonbeam, and then, by the few short words, in which they hailed their fellows of the night. Emily retired within her chamber, while they passed the casement. When she returned to it, all was again quiet. It was now very late, she was wearied with watching, and began to doubt the reality of what she had seen on the preceding night ; but she still lingered at the window, for her mind was too perturbed to admit of sleep. The moon shone with a clear lustre, that afforded her a complete view of the terrace ; but she saw only a solitary sentinel, pacing at one end of it ; and, at length, tired with expectation, she withdrew to seek rest,

Such, however, was the impression, left on her mind by the music, and the complaining she had formerly heard, as well as by the figure, which she fancied she had seen, that she determined to repeat the watch, on the following night.

Montoni, on the next day, took no notice of Emily's appointed visit, but she, more anxious than before to see him, sent Annette to inquire, at what hour he would admit her. He mentioned eleven o'clock, and Emily was punctual to the moment; at which she called up all her fortitude to support the shock of his presence and the dreadful recollections it enforced. He was with several of his officers, in the cedar room; on observing whom she paused; and her agitation increased, while he continued to converse with them, apparently not observing her, till some of his officers, turning round, saw Emily, and uttered an exclamation. She was hastily retiring, when Montoni's voice arrested her, and, in a faltering accent, she said,—“I would speak with you, Signor Montoni, if you are at leisure.”

“These are my friends,” he replied, “whatever you would say, they may hear.”

Emily, without replying, turned from the rude gaze of the chevaliers, and Montoni then followed her to the hall, whence he led her to a small room, of which he shut the door with violence. As she looked on his dark countenance, she again thought she saw the murderer of her aunt; and her mind was so convulsed with horror, that she had not power to recollect enough to explain the purport of her visit; and to trust herself with the mention of Madame Montoni was more than she dared.

Montoni at length impatiently inquired what she had to say? “I have no time for trifling,” he added, “my moments are important.”

Emily then told him, that she wished to return to France, and came to beg that he would permit her to do so.—But when he looked surprised, and inquired for the motive of the request, she hesitated, became paler than before, trembled, and had nearly sunk at his feet. He observed her emotion, with apparent indifference, and interrupted the silence by telling her, he must be gone. Emily, however, recalled her spirits sufficiently to enable her to repeat her request. And, when Montoni absolutely refused it, her slumbering mind was roused.

“I can no longer remain here with propriety, sir,” said she, “and I may be allowed to ask, by what right you detain me.”

“It is my will that you remain here,” said Montoni, laying his hand on the door to go; “let that suffice you.”

Emily, considering that she had no appeal from this will, forbore to dispute his right, and made a feeble effort to persuade him to be just. "While my aunt lived, sir," said she, in a tremulous voice, "my residence here was not improper; but now, that she is no more, I may surely be permitted to depart. My stay cannot benefit you, sir, and will only distress me."

"Who told you, that Madame Montoni was dead?" said Montoni, with an inquisitive eye. Emily hesitated, for nobody told her so, and she did not dare to avow the having seen that spectacle in the portal chamber, which had compelled her to the belief.

"Who told you so?" he repeated, more sternly.

"Alas! I know it too well," replied Emily: "spare me on this terrible subject!"

She sat down on a bench to support herself.

"If you wish to see her," said Montoni, "you may; she lies in the east turret."

He now left the room, without awaiting her reply, and returned to the cedar chamber, where such of the chevaliers as had not before seen Emily, began to rally him, on the discovery they had made; but Montoni did not appear disposed to bear this mirth, and they changed the subject.

Having talked with the subtle Orsino, on the plan of an excursion, which he meditated for a future day, his friend advised, that they should lie in wait for the enemy, which Verezzi impetuously opposed, reproached Orsino with want of spirit, and swore, that, if Montoni would let him lead on fifty men, he would conquer all that should oppose him.

Orsino smiled contemptuously; Montoni smiled too, but he also listened. Verezzi then proceeded with vehement declamation and assertion, till he was stopped by an argument of Orsino, which he knew not how to answer better than by invective. His fierce spirit detested the cunning caution of Orsino, whom he constantly opposed, and whose inveterate, though silent, hatred he had long ago incurred. And Montoni was a calm observer of both, whose different qualifications, he knew, and how to bend their opposite character to the perfection of his own designs. But Verezzi in the heat of opposition, now did not scruple to accuse Orsino of cowardice, at which the countenance of the latter, while he made no reply, was overspread with a livid paleness; and Montoni, who watched his lurking eye, saw him put his hand hastily into his bosom. But Verezzi, whose face glowing with crimson, formed a striking contrast to the complexion of Orsino, re-

marked not the action, and continued boldly declaiming against cowards to Cavigni, who was sily laughing at his vehemence, and at the silent mortification of Orfino, when the latter, retiring a few steps behind, drew forth a stiletto to stab his adversary in the back. Montoni arrested his half extended arm, and, with a significant look, made him return the poinard into his bosom, unseen by all except himself; for most of the party were disputing at a distant window, on the situation of a dell where they meant to form an ambuscade.

When Verezzi had turned round, the deadly hatred expressed on the features of his opponent, raising, for the first time, a suspicion of his intention, he laid his hand on his sword, and then, seeming to recollect himself, strode up to Montoni.

"Signor," said he, with a significant look at Orfino, "we are not a band of assassins; if you have business for brave men employ me on this expedition: you shall have the last drop of my blood; if you have only work for cowards—keep him," pointing to Orfino, "and let me quit Udolpho."

Orfino, still more incensed, again drew forth his stiletto, and rushed towards Verezzi, who, at the same instant, advanced with his sword, when Montoni and the rest of the party interfered and separated them.

"This is the conduct of a boy," said Montoni to Verezzi, "not of a man: be more moderate in your speech."

"Moderation is the virtue of cowards," retorted Verezzi; "they are moderate in every thing—but in fear."

"I accept your words," said Montoni, turning upon him with a fierce and haughty look, and drawing his sword out of the scabbard.

"With all my heart," cried Verezzi, "though I did not mean them for you."

He directed a pass at Montoni; and, while they fought, the villain Orfino, made another attempt to stab Verezzi, and was again prevented.

The combatants were, at length, separated; and, after a very long and violent dispute, reconciled. Montoni then left the room with Orfino, whom he detained in private consultation for a considerable time.

Emily, meanwhile, stunned by the last words of Montoni, forgot, for the moment, his declaration, that she should continue in the castle, while she thought of her unfortunate aunt, who, he had said, was laid in the east turret. In suffering the remains of his wife to lie thus long unburied, there appeared a degree of bru-

tality more shocking than she had suspected even Montoni could practise.

After a long struggle, she determined to accept his permission to visit the turret, and to take a last look of her ill-fated aunt: with which design she returned to her chamber, and, while she waited for Annette to accompany her, endeavoured to acquire fortitude sufficient to support her through the approaching scene, for, though she trembled to encounter it, she knew that to remember the performance of this last act of duty would hereafter afford her consoling satisfaction.

Annette came, and Emily mentioned her purpose, from which the former endeavoured to dissuade her, though without effect, and Annette was, with much difficulty, prevailed upon to accompany her to the turret; but no consideration could make her promise to enter the chamber of death.

They now left the corridor, and, having reached the foot of the staircase, which Emily had formerly ascended, Annette declared she would go no further, and Emily proceeded alone. When she saw the track of blood, which she had before observed, her spirits fainted, and, being compelled to rest on the stairs, she almost determined to proceed no further. The pause of a few moments restored her resolution, and she went on.

As she drew near the landing place, upon which the upper chamber opened, she remembered, that the door was formerly fastened, and apprehended, that it might still be so. In this expectation, however, she was mistaken; for the door opened at once, into a dusky and silent chamber, round which she fearfully looked, and then slowly advanced, when a hollow voice spoke. Emily, who was unable to speak, or to move from the spot, uttered no sound of terror. The voice spoke again; and, then, thinking that it resembled that of Madame Montoni, Emily's spirits were instantly roused; she rushed towards a bed, that stood in a remote part of the room, and drew aside the curtain. Within appeared a pale and emaciated face. She started back, then again advanced, shuddered as she took up the skeleton hand, that lay stretched upon the quilt; then let it drop, and then viewed the face with a long, unsettled gaze. It was that of Madame Montoni, though so changed by illness, that the resemblance of what it had been, could scarcely be traced in what it now appeared. She was still alive, and, raising her heavy eyes, she turned them on her niece.

"Where have you been so long?" said she, in the same hollow tone, "I thought you had forsaken me."

"Do you indeed live," said Emily, at length, "or is this but a terrible apparition?" She received no answer, and again she snatched up the hand. "This is substance," she exclaimed, "but it is cold—cold as marble!" She let it fall. "O, if you really live, Speak!" said Emily, in a voice of desperation, "that I may not lose my senses—say you know me!"

"I do live," replied Madame Montoni, "but—I feel that I am about to die."

Emily clasped the hand she held, more eagerly, and groaned. They were both silent for some moments. Then Emily endeavoured to sooth her, and inquired what had reduced her to this present deplorable state.

Montoni, when he removed her to the turret under the improbable suspicion of having attempted his life, had ordered the men employed on the occasion, to observe a strict secrecy concerning her. To this he was influenced by a double motive.—He meant to debar her from the comfort of Emily's visits, and to secure an opportunity of privately dispatching her, should any new circumstances occur to confirm the present suggestions of his suspecting mind. His consciousness of the hatred he deserved was natural enough should at first lead him to attribute to her the attempt that had been made upon his life; and, though there was no other reason to believe that she was concerned in that atrocious design, his suspicions remained; he continued to confine her in the turret, under a strict guard; and, without pity or remorse, had suffered her to lie, forlorn and neglected, under a raging fever, till it had reduced her to the present state.

The track of blood, which Emily had seen on the stairs, had flowed from the unbound wound of one of the men employed to carry Madame Montoni, and which he had received in the late affray. At night these men, having contented themselves with securing the door of their prisoner's room, had retired from guard; and then it was, that Emily, at the time of her first inquiry, had found the turret so silent and deserted.

When she had attempted to open the door of the chamber, her aunt was sleeping, and this occasioned the silence, which had contributed to delude her into a belief, that she was no more; yet had her terror permitted her to persevere longer in the call, she would probably have awakened Madame Montoni, and have been spared much suffering. The spectacle in the portal chamber, which afterwards confirmed Emily's horrible suspicion, was the corpse of a man, who had fallen in the affray, and the same which had been borne into the servants' hall, where she took re-

fuge from the tumult. This man had lingered under his wounds for some days ; and, soon after his death, his body had been removed on the couch, on which he died, for interment in the vault beneath the chapel, through which Emily and Barnardine had passed to the chamber.

Emily, after asking Madame Montoni a thousand questions concerning herself, left her, and sought Montoni ; for the more solemn interest she felt for her aunt, made her now regardless of the resentment her remonstrances might draw upon herself, and of the improbability of his granting what she meant to entreat.

" Madame Montoni is now dying, sir," said Emily, as soon as she saw him—" Your resentment, surely will not pursue her to the last moment ; Suffer her to be removed from that forlorn room to her own apartment, and to have necessary comforts administered."

" Of what service will that be, if she is dying ?" said Montoni with apparent indifference.

" The service, at least, of saving you, sir, from a few of those pangs of conscience you must suffer, when you shall be in the same situation," said Emily, with imprudent indignation, of which Montoni soon made her sensible, by commanding her to quit his presence. Then forgetting her resentment, and impressed only by compassion for the piteous state of her aunt, dying without succour, she submitted to humble herself to Montoni, and to adopt every persuasive means, that might reduce him to relent towards his wife.

For a considerable time he was proof against all she said, and all she looked ; but at length the divinity of pity, beaming in Emily's eyes, seemed to touch his heart. He turned away, ashamed of his better feelings, half sullen and half relenting ; but finally consented, that his wife should be removed to her own apartment, and that Emily should attend her. Dreading equally ; that this relief might arrive too late, and that Montoni might retract his concession, Emily scarcely staid to thank him for it, but, assisted by Annette, she quickly prepared Madame Montoni's bed, and they carried her a cordial, that might enable her feeble frame to sustain the fatigue of a removal.

Madame was scarcely arrived in her own apartment, when an order was given by her husband that she should remain in the turret ; but Emily, thankful that she had made such dispatch, hastened to inform him of it, as well as that a second removal would instantly prove fatal, and he suffered his wife to continue where she was.

During this day, Emily never left Madame Montoni, except to prepare such little nourishing things as she judged necessary to sustain her, and which Madame Montoni received with quiet acquiescence, though she seemed sensible that they could not save her from approaching dissolution, and scarcely appeared to wish for life. Emily meanwhile watched over her with the most tender solicitude, no longer seeing her imperious aunt in the poor object before her, but the sister of her late beloved father, in a situation that called for all her compassion and kindness. When night came, she determined to sit up with her aunt, but this the latter positively forbade, commanding her to retire to rest, and Annette alone to remain in her chamber. Rest was, indeed, necessary to Emily, whose spirits and frame were equally wearied by the occurrences and exertions of the day; but she would not leave Madame Montoni, till after the turn of midnight, a period then thought so critical by the physicians. Soon after twelve, having enjoined Annette to be wakeful, and to call her, should any change appear for the worse, Emily sorrowfully bade Madame Montoni good night, and withdrew to her chamber.— Her spirits were more than usually depressed by the piteous condition of her aunt, whose recovery she scarcely dared to expect. To her own misfortunes she saw no period, inclosed as she was, in a remote castle, beyond the reach of any friends, had she possessed such, and beyond the pity even of strangers; while she knew herself to be in the power of a man capable of any action, which his interest, or his ambition, might suggest.

Occupied by melancholy reflections and by anticipations as sad, she did not retire immediately to rest, but leaned thoughtfully on her open casement. The scene before her of woods and mountains, reposing in the moonlight, formed a regretted contrast with the state of her mind; but the lonely murmur of these woods, and the view of this sleeping landscape, gradually soothed her emotions and softened her to tears.

She continued to weep, for sometime, lost to every thing, but to a gentle sense of her misfortunes. When she, at length, took the handkerchief from her eyes, she perceived, before her, on the terrace below, the figure she had formerly observed, which stood fixed and silent, immediately opposite to her casement. On perceiving it, she started back, and terror for sometime overcame curiosity; at length, she returned to the casement, and still the figure was before it, which she now compelled herself to observe, but was utterly unable to speak, as she had formerly intended. The moon shone with a clear light, and it was, per-

haps, the agitation of her mind, that prevented her distinguishing, with any degree of accuracy, the form before her. It was still stationary, and she began to doubt, whether it was really animated.

Her scattered thoughts were now so far returned as to remind her, that her light exposed her to dangerous observation, and she was stepping back to remove it, when she perceived the figure move, and then wave what seemed to be its arm, as if to beckon her; and, while she gazed, fixed in fear, it repeated the action. She now attempted to speak, but the words died on her lips, and she went from the casement to remove her light; as she was doing which, she heard, from without, a faint groan. Listening, but not daring to return, she presently heard it repeated.

"Good God!—what can this mean!" said she.

Again she listened, but the sound came no more; and, after a long interval of silence, she recovered courage enough to go to the casement, when she again saw the same appearance! It beckoned again, and again uttered a low sound.

"That groan was surely human!" said she, "I *will* speak."

"Who is it," cried Emily in a faint voice, "that wanders at this late hour?"

The figure raised its head but suddenly started away, and glided down the terrace. She watched it for a long while, passing swiftly in the moonlight, but heard no footstep, till a sentinel from the other extremity of the rampart walked slowly along. The man stopped under her window, and looking up, called her by name. She was retiring precipitately, but a second summons inducing her to reply, the soldier then respectfully asked if she had seen any thing pass. On her answering, that she had; he said no more, but walked away down the terrace, Emily following him with her eyes, till he was lost in the distance. But, as he was on guard, she knew he could not go beyond the rampart, and therefore resolved to await his return.

Soon after, his voice was heard, at a distance, calling loudly; and then a voice still more distant answered, and, in the next moment, the watchword was given, and passed along the terrace. As the soldiers moved hastily under the casement, she called to inquire what had happened, but they passed without regarding her.

Emily's thoughts returning to the figure she had seen, "It cannot be a person, who has designs upon the castle," said she; "such an one would conduct himself very differently. He would not venture were sentinels were on watch, nor fix himself opposite to a window, were he perceived he must be observ-

ed ; much less would he beckon, or utter a sound of complaint. Yet it cannot be a prisoner, for how could he obtain the opportunity to wander thus ?”

If she had been subject to vanity, she might have supposed this figure to be some inhabitant of the castle, who wandered under her casement in the hope of seeing her, and of being allowed to declare his admiration ; but this opinion never occurred to Emily, and, if it had, she would have dismissed it as improbable, on considering, that, when the opportunity of speaking had occurred, it had been suffered to pass in silence ; and that, even at the moment in which she had spoken, the form had abruptly quitted the place.

While she mused, two sentinels walked up the rampart in earnest conversation, of which she caught a few words, and learned from these, that one of their comrades had fallen down senseless. Soon after, three other soldiers appeared slowly advancing from the bottom of the terrace, but she heard only a low voice, that came at intervals. As they drew near, she perceived this to be the voice of him, who walked in the middle, apparently supported by his comrades ; and she again called to them, inquiring what had happened. At the sound of her voice, they stopped, and looked up, while she repeated her question and was told, that Roberto, their fellow of the watch, had been seized with a fit, and that his cry, as he fell had caused a false alarm.

“ Is he subject to fits ?” said Emily.

“ Yes, Signora,” replied Roberto ; “ but if I had not, what I saw was enough to have frightened the Pope himself.”

“ What was it ?” inquired Emily, trembling.

“ I cannot tell what it was, lady, or what I saw, or how it vanished,” replied the soldier, who seemed to shudder at the recollection.

“ Was it the person whom you followed down the rampart, that has occasioned you this alarm ?” said Emily, endeavouring to conceal her own.

“ Person !” exclaimed the man,—“ it was the devil, and this is not the first time I have seen him !”

“ Nor will it be the last,” observed one of his comrades laughing.

“ No, no, I warrant not,” said another.

“ Well,” rejoined Roberto, “ you may be as merry now, as you please ; you was none so jocose the other night, Sebastian, when you was on watch with Launcelot.”

“ Launcelot need not talk of that,” replied Sebastian, “ let him remember how he stood trembling, and unable to give the

sword, till the man was gone. If the man had not come so silently upon us, I would have seized him, and soon made him tell who he was."

"What man?" inquired Emily.

"It was no man, lady," said Launcelot, who stood by, "but the devil himself as my comrade says. What man, who does not live in the castle, could get within the walls at midnight? Why, I might just as well pretend to march to Venice and get among all the Senators, when they are counselling; and I warrant I should have more chance of getting out again alive, than any fellow, that we should catch within the gates after dark. So I think I have proved plainly enough, that this can be nobody that lives out of the castle; and now I will prove, that it can be nobody that lives in the castle—for, if he did—why should he be afraid to be seen? So after this, I hope nobody will pretend to tell me it was any body. No, I say again, by holy Pope! it was the devil, and Sebastian, there, knows this is not the first time we have seen him."

"When did you see the figure, then, before?" said Emily half smiling, who, though she thought the conversation somewhat too much, felt an interest, which would not permit her to conclude it.

"About a week ago, lady," said Sebastian, taking up the story.

"And where?"

"On the rampart, lady, higher up."

"Did you pursue it, that it fled?"

"No, Signora. Launcelot and I were on watch together, and every thing was so still, you might have heard a mouse stir, when, suddenly, Launcelot says—Sebastian! do you see nothing? I turned my head a little to the left, as it might be—thus.—No, says I. Hush! said Launcelot,—look yonder—just by the last cannon on the rampart! I looked, and then thought I did see something move; but there being no light, but what the stars gave, I could not be certain. We stood quite silent, to watch it, and presently saw something pass along the castle wall just opposite to us!"

"Why did not you seize it, then?" cried a soldier, who had scarcely spoken till now.

"Aye, why did you not seize it?" said Roberto.

"You should have been there to have done that," replied Sebastian. "You would have been bold enough to have taken it by the throat, though it had been the devil himself; we could not take such a liberty, perhaps—because we are not so well ac-

quainted with him, as you are. But, as I was saying, it stole by us so quickly, that we had not time to get rid of our surprise, before it was gone. Then, we knew it was in vain to follow.—We kept constant watch all that night, but we saw it no more. Next morning, we told some of our comrades, who were on duty on other parts of the ramparts, what we had seen; but they had seen nothing, and laughed at us, and it was not till to night, that the same figure walked again.”

“Where did you lose it, friend?” said Emily to Roberto.

“When I left you, lady,” replied the man, “you might see me go down the rampart, but it was not till I reached the east terrace, that I saw any thing. Then, the moon shining bright, I saw something like a shadow sitting before me, as it were, at some distance. I stopped, when I turned the corner of the east tower, where I had seen this figure not a moment before,—but it was gone! As I stood, looking through the old arch, which leads to the east rampart, and where I am sure it had passed, I heard, all of a sudden, such a sound!—It was not like a groan, or a cry, or a shout, or any thing I ever heard in my life. I heard it only once, and that was enough for me; for I know nothing that happened after, till I found my comrades, here, about me.”

“Come,” said Sebastian, “let us go to our posts—the moon is setting. Good night, lady!”

“Aye, let us go,” rejoined Roberto. “Good night, lady.”

“Good night; the holy mother guard you!” said Emily, as she closed her casement and retired to reflect upon the strange circumstance that had just occurred, connecting which with what had happened on former nights, she endeavoured to derive from the whole something more positive than conjecture. But her imagination was inflamed, while her judgment was not enlightened, and the terrors of superstition again pervaded her mind.

C H A P. XXX.

“There is one within,
Besides the things, that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights, seen by the watch.”

JULIUS CÆSAR.

IN the morning, Emily found Madame Montoni nearly in the same condition, as on the preceding night; she had slept little, and that little had not refreshed her; she smiled on her niece, and seemed cheered by her presence, but spoke only a few words,

and never named Montoni, who, however, soon after, entered the room. His wife, when she understood that he was there, appeared much agitated, but was entirely silent, till Emily rose from a chair at the bed side, when she begged in a feeble voice, that she would not leave her.

The visit of Montoni was not to sooth his wife, whom he knew to be dying, or to console, or to ask her forgiveness, but to make a last effort to procure that signature, which would transfer her estates in Languedoc, after her death, to him, rather than to Emily. This was a scene, that exhibited on his part, his usual inhumanity, and, on that of Madame Montoni, a persevering spirit, contending with a feeble frame; while Emily repeatedly declared to him her willingness to resign all claim to those estates, rather than that the last hours of her aunt should be disturbed by contention. Montoni, however, did not leave the room, till his wife, exhausted by the obstinate dispute, had fainted, and she lay so long insensible, that Emily began to fear that the spark of life was extinguished. At length, she revived, and, looking feebly up at her niece, whose tears were falling over her, made an effort to speak, but her words were unintelligible, and Emily again apprehended she was dying. Afterwards, however, she recovered her speech, and, being somewhat restored by a cordial, conversed for a considerable time, on the subject of her estates in France, with clearness and precision. She directed her niece where to find some papers relative to them, which she had hitherto concealed from the search of Montoni, and earnestly charged her never to suffer these papers to escape her.

Soon after this conversation, Madame Montoni sunk into a dose, and continued slumbering, till evening, when she seemed better than she had been since her removal from the turret.— Emily never left her, for a moment, till long after midnight, and even then would not have quitted the room, had not her aunt entreated, that she would retire to rest. She then obeyed, the more willingly, because her patient appeared somewhat recruited by sleep; and, giving Annette the same injunction, as on the preceding night, she withdrew to her own apartment. But her spirits were wakeful and agitated, and, finding it impossible to sleep, she determined to watch, once more, for the mysterious appearance, that had so much interested and alarmed her.

It was now the second watch of the night, and about the time when the figure had before appeared. Emily heard the passing steps of the sentinels, on the rampart, as they changed guard; and, when all was again silent, she took her station at the case-

ment, leaving her lamp in a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice from without. The moon gave a faint and uncertain light, for heavy vapours surrounded it, and, often rolling over the disk, left the scene below in total darkness. It was in one of these moments of obscurity, that she observed a small and lambent flame, moving at some distance on the terrace. While she gazed, it disappeared, and the moon again emerging from the lurid and heavy thunder clouds, she turned her attention to the heavens, where the vivid lightnings darted from cloud to cloud, and flashed silently on the woods below. She loved to catch in the momentary gleam, the gloomy landscape. Sometimes, a cloud opened its light upon a distant mountain, and while the sudden splendour illumined all its recesses of rock and wood, the rest of the scene remained in deep shadow; at others, partial features of the castle were revealed by the glimpse—the ancient arch leading to the east rampart, the turret above, or the fortifications beyond; and then, perhaps, the whole edifice with all its towers, its dark massy walls and pointed casements would appear and vanish in an instant.

Emily, looking again upon the rampart, perceived the flame she had seen before; it moved onward; and, soon after, she thought she heard a footstep. The light appeared and disappeared frequently, while, as she watched, it glided under her casements, and, at the same instant, she was certain, that a footstep passed, but the darkness did not permit her to distinguish any object except the flame. It moved away, and then, by a gleam of lightning, she perceived some person on the terrace.—All the anxieties of the preceding night returned. This person advanced, and the playing flame alternately appeared and vanished. Emily wished to speak, to end her doubts, whether this figure were human or supernatural; but her courage failed as often as she attempted utterance, till the light moved again under the casement, and she faintly demanded who passed.

“A friend,” replied a voice.

“What friend?” said Emily, somewhat encouraged, “who are you, and what is that light you carry?”

“I am Anthonio, one of the Signor’s soldiers,” replied the voice.

“And what is that tapering light you bear?” said Emily, “See how it darts upwards,—and now it vanishes!”

“This light, lady,” said the soldier, “has appeared to night as you see it, on the point of my lance, ever since I have been on watch; but what it means I cannot tell.”

"This is very strange!" said Emily.

"My fellow guard," continued the man, "has the same flame on his arms; he says he has sometimes seen it before. I never did; I am but lately come to the castle, for I have not been long a soldier."

"How does your comrade account for it?" said Emily.

"He says it is an omen, lady, and bodes no good."

"And what harm can it bode?" rejoined Emily.

"He knows not so much as that, lady."

Whether Emily was alarmed by this omen, or not, she certainly was relieved from much terror by discovering this man to be only a soldier on duty, and it immediately occurred to her, that it might be him, who had occasioned so much alarm on the preceding night. There were, however, some circumstances, that still required explanation. As far as she could judge by the faint moonlight, that had assisted her observation, the figure she had seen did not resemble this man either in shape or size; besides, she was certain it had carried no arms. The silence of its steps, if steps it had, the moaning sounds, too, which it had uttered, and its strange disappearance, were circumstances of mysterious import, that did not apply, with probability, to a soldier engaged in the duty of his guard.

She now inquired of the sentinel, whether he had seen any person besides his fellow watch, walking on the terrace, about midnight; and then briefly related what she had herself observed.

"I was not on guard that night, lady," replied the man, "but I heard of what happened. There are amongst us, who believe strange things. Strange stories, too, have long been told of this castle, but it is no business of mine to repeat them; and, for my part, I have no reason to complain; our Chief does nobly by us."

"I commend your prudence," said Emily, "Good night, and accept this from me," she added, throwing him a small piece of coin, and then closing the casement to put an end to the discourse.

When he was gone, she opened it again, listened with a gloomy pleasure to the distant thunder, that began to murmur among the mountains, and watched the arrowy lightnings, which broke over the remoter scene. The pealing thunder rolled onward, and then, reverberated by the mountains, other thunder seemed to answer from the opposite horizon; while the accumulating clouds entirely concealing the moon, assumed a red sulphureous tinge, that foretold a violent storm.

Emily remained at her casement, till the vivid lightning that now, every instant, revealed the wide horizon and the landscape below, made it no longer safe to do so, and she went to her couch ; but, unable to compose her mind to sleep, still listened in silent awe to the tremendous sounds that seemed to shake the castle to its foundation.

She had continued thus for a considerable time, when, amidst the uproar of the storm, she thought she heard a voice, and, raising herself to listen, saw the chamber door open, and Annette enter with a countenance of wild affright.

"She is dying, ma'amfelle, my lady is dying," said she.

Emily started up, and ran to Madame Montoni's room. When she entered, her aunt appeared to have fainted, for she was quite still, and insensible ; and Emily with a strength of mind, that refused to yield to grief, while any duty required her activity, applied every means that seemed likely to restore her. But the last struggle was over—she was gone for ever.

When Emily perceived, that all her efforts were ineffectual, she interrogated the terrified Annette, and learned, that Madame Montoni had fallen into a doze, soon after Emily's departure, in which she had continued, until a few minutes before her death.

"I wondered, ma'amfelle," said Annette, "what was the reason my lady did not seem frightened at the thunder, when I was so terrified, and I went often to the bed to speak to her, but she appeared to be asleep ; till presently I heard a strange noise, and, on going to her saw she was dying."

Emily, at this recital, shed tears. She had no doubt but that the violent change in the air, which the tempest produced, had effected this fatal one, on the exhausted frame of Madame Montoni.

After some deliberation, she determined that Montoni should not be informed of this event till the morning, for she considered, that he might, perhaps, utter some inhuman expressions, such as in the present temper of her spirits she could not bear. With Annette alone, therefore, whom she encouraged by her own example, she performed some of the last solemn offices for the dead, and compelled herself to watch during the night, by the body of her deceased aunt. During this solemn period, rendered more awful by the tremendous storm that shook the air, she frequently addressed herself to Heaven for support and protection, and her pious prayers we may believe, were accepted of the God, that giveth comfort.

C H A P. XXXI.

"The midnight clock has toll'd ; and hark, the bell
Of death beats slow ! heard ye the note profound ;
It pauses now ; and now, with rising knell,
Flings to the hollow gale its fullen sound."

MASON.

WHEN Montoni was informed of the death of his wife, and considered that she had died without giving him the signature so necessary to the accomplishment of his wishes, no sense of decency restrained the expression of his resentment. Emily anxiously avoided his presence, and watched, during two days and two nights, with little intermission, by the corps of her late aunt. Her mind deeply impressed with the unhappy fate of this object, she forgot all her faults, her unjust and imperious conduct to herself ; and, remembering only her sufferings, thought of her only with tender compassion. Sometimes, however, she could not avoid musing upon the strange infatuation that had proved so fatal to her aunt, and had involved herself in a labyrinth of misfortune, from which she saw no means of escaping,—the marriage with Montoni. But, when she considered this circumstance, it was "more in sorrow than in anger,"—more for the purpose of indulging lamentation than reproach.

In her pious cares she was not disturbed by Montoni, who not only avoided the chamber, where the remains of his wife were laid, but that part of the castle adjoining to it, as if he had apprehended a contagion in death. He seemed to have given no orders respecting the funeral, and Emily began to fear he meant to offer a new insult to the memory of Madame Montoni ; but from this apprehension she was relieved, when, on the evening of the second day, Annette informed her, that the interment was to take place that night. She knew, that Montoni would not attend ; and it was so very grievous to her to think that the remains of her unfortunate aunt would pass to the grave without one relative, or friend to pay them the last decent rites, that she determined to be deterred by no considerations for herself, from observing this duty. She would otherwise have shrunk from the circumstance of following them to the cold vault, to which they were to be carried by men, whose air and countenance seemed to stamp them for murderers, at the midnight hour of silence and privacy, which Montoni had chosen for committing, if possible, to oblivion the reliques of a woman, whom his harsh conduct had at least contributed to destroy.

Emily shuddering with emotions of horror and grief, assisted by Annette, prepared the corpse for interment; and, having wrapt it in cerements, and covered it with a winding-sheet, they watched beside it, till past midnight, when they heard the approaching footsteps of the men, who were to lay it in its earthy bed. It was with difficulty, that Emily overcame her emotion, when the door of the chamber being thrown open, their gloomy countenances were seen by the glare of the torch they carried, and two of them, without speaking, lifted the body on their shoulders, while the third preceding them with the light, descended through the castle towards the grave, which was in the lower vault of the chapel within the castle walls.

They had to cross two courts, towards the east wing of the castle, which, adjoining the chapel, was, like it, in ruins: but the silence and gloom of these courts had now little power over Emily's mind, occupied as it was, with more mournful ideas; and she scarcely heard the low and dismal hooting of the night-birds, that roosted among the ivyed battlements of the ruin, or perceived the still flittings of the bat, which frequently crossed her way. But, when, having entered the chapel, and passed between the mouldering pillars of the aisles, the bearers stopped at a flight of steps, that led down to a low arched door, and, their comrade having descended to unlock it, she saw imperfectly the gloomy abyss beyond;—saw the corpse of her aunt carried down these steps, and the ruffian-like figure, that stood with a torch at the bottom to receive it—all her fortitude was lost in emotions of inexpressible grief and terror. She turned to lean upon Annette, who was cold and trembling like herself, and she lingered so long on the summit of the flight, that the gleam of the torch began to die away on the pillars of the chapel, and the men were almost beyond her view. Then, the gloom around her awakening other fears, and a sense of what she considered to be her duty overcoming her reluctance, she descended to the vaults, following the echo of footsteps and the faint ray, that pierced the darkness, till the harsh grating of a distant door, that was opened to receive the corpse, again appalled her.

After the pause of a moment, she went on, and, as she entered the vaults, saw between the arches, at some distance, the men lay down the body near the edge of an open grave, where stood another of Montoni's men and a priest, whom she did not observe, till he began the burial service; then, lifting her eyes from the ground, she saw the venerable figure of the friar, and heard him in a low voice, equally solemn and affecting, perform

the service for the dead. At the moment, in which they let down the body into the earth, the scene was such as only the dark pencil of a Domenichino, perhaps, could have done justice to. The fierce features and wild dress of the *condottieri*, bending with their torches over the grave, into which the corpse was descending, were contrasted by the venerable figure of the monk, wrapt in long black garments, his cowl thrown back from his pale face, on which the light gleaming strongly shewed the lines of affliction softened by piety, and the few grey locks, which time had spared on his temples : while, beside him, stood the softer form of Emily, who leaned for support upon Annette ; her face half averted, and shaded by a thin veil, that fell over her figure ; and her mild and beautiful countenance fixed in grief so solemn as admitted not of tears, while she thus saw committed untimely to the earth her last relative and friend. The gleams, thrown between the arches of the vaults, where, here and there, the broken ground marked the spots in which other bodies had been recently interred, and the general obscurity beyond were circumstances, that alone would have led on the imagination of a spectator to scenes more horrible, than even that, which was pictured at the grave of the misguided and unfortunate Madame Montoni.

When the service was over, the friar regarded Emily with attention and surprise, and looked as if he wished to speak to her, but was restrained by the presence of the *condottieri*, who as they now led the way to the courts, amused themselves with jokes upon his holy order, which he endured in silence, demanding only to be conducted safely to his convent, and to which Emily listened with concern and even horror. When they reached the court, the monk gave her his blessing, and, after a lingering look of pity, turned away to the portal, whither one of the men carried a torch ; while Annette, lighting another, preceded Emily to her apartment. The appearance of the friar and the expression of tender compassion, with which he had regarded her, had interested Emily, who, though it was at her earnest supplication, that Montoni had consented to allow a priest to perform the last rites for his deceased wife, knew nothing concerning this person, till Annette now informed her, that he belonged to a monastery, situated among the mountains at a few miles distance. The Superior, who regarded Montoni and his associates, not only with aversion, but with terror, had probably feared to offend him by refusing his request, and had, therefore, ordered a monk to officiate at the funeral, who, with the meek spirit of a christian,

had overcome his reluctance to enter the walls of such a castle, by the wish of performing what he considered to be his duty, and, as the chapel was built on consecrated ground, had not objected to commit to it the remains of the late unhappy Madame Montoni.

Several days passed with Emily in total seclusion, and in a state of mind, partaking both of terror for herself, and grief for the departed. She, at length, determined to make other efforts to persuade Montoni to permit her to return to France. Why he should wish to detain her, she could scarcely dare to conjecture; but it was too certain that he did so, and the absolute refusal he had formerly given to her departure allowed her little hope, that he would now consent to it. But the horror, which his presence inspired, made her defer, from day to day, the mention of this subject; and at last she was awakened from her inactivity only by a message from him, desiring her attendance at a certain hour. She began to hope he meant to resign, now that her aunt was no more, the authority he had usurped over her; till she recollected, that the estates, which had occasioned so much contention, were now hers, and she then feared Montoni was about to employ some stratagem for obtaining them, and that he would detain her his prisoner, till he succeeded. This thought, instead of overcoming her with despondency, roused all the latent powers of her fortitude into action; and the property, which she would willingly have resigned to secure the peace of her aunt, she resolved, that no common sufferings of her own should ever compel her to give to Montoni. For Valancourt's sake also she determined to preserve these estates, since they would afford that competency, by which she hoped to secure the comfort of their future lives. As she thought of this she indulged the tenderness of tears, and anticipated the delight of that moment, when, with affectionate generosity, she might tell him they were his own. She saw the smile, that lighted up his features—the affectionate regard, which spoke at once his joy and thanks; and, at this instant, she believed she could brave any suffering which the evil spirit of Montoni might be preparing for her. Remembering then, for the first time since her aunt's death, the papers relative to the estates in question, she determined to search for them, as soon as her interview with Montoni was over.

With these resolutions she met him at the appointed time, and waited to hear his intention before she renewed her request. With him were Orfino, and another officer, and both were stand-

ing near a table, covered with papers, which he appeared to be examining.

"I sent for you, Emily," said Montoni, raising his head, "that you might be a witness in some business, which I am transacting with my friend Orsino. All that is required of you will be to sign your name to this paper:" he then took one up, hurried unintelligibly over some lines, and, laying it before her on the table, offered her a pen. She took it, and was going to write—when the design of Montoni came upon her mind like a flash of lightning; she trembled, let the pen fall, and refused to sign what she had not read. Montoni affected to laugh at her scruples, and, taking up the paper, again pretended to read; but Emily, who still trembled on perceiving her danger, and was astonished, that her own credulity had so nearly betrayed her, positively refused to sign any paper whatever. Montoni, for sometime, persevered in affecting to ridicule this refusal; but, when he perceived by her steady perseverance, that she understood his design, he changed his manner, and bade her follow him to another room. There he told her, that he had been willing to spare himself and her the trouble of useless contest, in an affair where his will was justice, and where she should find it law; and had, therefore, endeavoured to persuade, rather than to compel, her to the practice of her duty.

"I, as the husband of the late Signora Montoni," he added, "am the heir of all she possessed; the estates, therefore, which she refused to me in her lifetime, can no longer be withheld, and, for your own sake, I would undeceive you, respecting a foolish assertion she once made to you in my hearing—that these estates would be yours, if she died without resigning them to me. She knew at that moment, she had no power to withhold them from me, after her decease; and I think you have more sense, than to provoke my resentment by advancing an unjust claim. I am not in the habit of flattering, and you will, therefore, receive, as sincere, the praise I bestow, when I say, that you possess an understanding superior to that of your sex; and that you have none of those contemptible foibles, that frequently mark the female character—such as avarice and the love of power, which latter makes women delight to contradict and to tease, when they cannot conquer. If I understand your disposition and your mind, you hold in sovereign contempt these common failings of your sex."

Montoni paused; and Emily remained silent and expecting; for she knew him too well, to believe he would condescend to

such flattery, unless he thought it would promote his own interest ; and, though he had forbore to name vanity among the foibles of women, it was evident, that he considered it to be a predominant one, since he designed to sacrifice to hers the character and understanding of her whole sex.

" Judging as I do," resumed Montoni, " I cannot believe you will oppose, where you know you cannot conquer, or, indeed, that you would wish to conquer, or be avaricious of any property, when you have not justice on your side. I think it proper, however, to acquaint you with the alternative. If you have a just opinion of the subject in question, you shall be allowed a safe conveyance to France, within a short period ; but, if you are so unhappy as to be misled by the late assertion of the Signora, you shall remain my prisoner, till you are convinced of your error."

Emily calmly said,

" I am not so ignorant, Signor, of the laws on this subject, as to be misled by the assertion of any person. The law, in the present instance, gives me the estates in question, and my own hand shall never betray my right."

" I have been mistaken in my opinion of you, it appears," rejoined Montoni, sternly. " You speak boldly, and presumptuously, upon a subject, which you do not understand. For once, I am willing to pardon the conceit of ignorance ; the weakness of your sex, too, from which, it seems you are not exempt, claims some allowance ; but, if you persist in this strain—you have every thing to fear from my justice."

" From your justice, Signor," rejoined Emily, " I have nothing to fear—I have only to hope."

Montoni looked at her with vexation, and seemed considering what to say. " I find that you are weak enough," he resumed, " to credit the idle assertion I alluded to ! For your own sake I lament this ; as to me, it is of little consequence. Your credulity can punish only yourself ; and I must pity the weakness of mind, which leads you to so much suffering as you are compelling me to prepare for you."

" You may find, perhaps, Signor," said Emily, with mild dignity, " that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause ; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression."

" You speak like a heroine," said Montoni, contemptuously ; " we shall see whether you can suffer like one."

Emily was silent, and he left the room.

Recollecting, that it was for Valancourt's sake she had thus resisted, she now sailed complacently upon the threatened sufferings, and retired to the spot, which her aunt had pointed out as the repository of the papers, relative to the estates, where she found them as described ; and, since she knew of no better place of concealment, than this, returned them, without examining their contents, being fearful of discovery, while she should attempt a perusal.

To her own solitary chamber she once more returned, and there thought again of the late conversation with Montoni, and of the evil she might expect from opposition to his will. But his power did not appear so terrible to her imagination, as it was wont to do : a sacred pride was in her heart, that taught it to swell against the pressure of injustice, and almost to glory in the quiet sufferance of ills, in a cause, which had also the interest of Valancourt for its object. For the first time, she felt the full extent of her own superiority to Montoni, and despised the authority, which, till now, she had only feared.

As she sat musing a peal of laughter rose from the terrace, and, on going to the casement, she saw, with inexpressible surprise, three ladies, dressed in the gala habit of Venice, walking with several gentlemen below. She gazed in an astonishment that made her remain at the window, regardless of being observed, till the group passed under it ; and, one of the strangers looking up, she perceived the features of Signora Livona, with whose manners she had been so much charmed, the day after her arrival at Venice, and who had been there introduced at the table of Montoni. This discovery occasioned her an emotion of doubtful joy ; for it was matter of joy and comfort to know, that a person, of a mind so gentle, as that of Signora Livona seemed to be, was near her ; yet there was something so extraordinary in her being at this castle, circumstanced as it now was, and evidently, by the gaiety of her air, with her own consent, that a very painful surmise arose, concerning her character. But the thought was so shocking to Emily, whose affection the fascinating manners of the Signora had won, and appeared so improbable, when she remembered these manners, that she dismissed it almost instantly.

On Annette's appearance, however, she inquired, concerning these strangers ; and the former was as eager to tell as Emily was to learn.

" They are just come, ma'amfelle," said Annette, " with two Signors from Venice, and I was glad to see such Christian faces

once again.—But what can they mean by coming here ? They must surely be stark mad to come freely to such a place as this ! Yet they do come freely, for they seem merry enough, I am sure.”

“ They were taken prisoners, perhaps ?” said Emily.

“ Taken prisoners !” exclaimed Annette ; “ no, indeed, ma’amfelle, not they. I remember one of them very well at Venice : she came two or three times to the Signor’s, you know, ma’amfelle, and it was said, but I did not believe a word of it—it was said, that the Signor liked her better than he should do. Then, why, says I, bring her to my lady ? Very true, said Ludovico ; but he looked as if he knew more, too.”

Emily desired Annette would endeavour to learn who these ladies were, as well as all she could concerning them ; and she then changed the subject, and spoke of distant France.

“ Ah, ma’amfelle ! we shall never see it more !” said Annette, almost weeping.—“ I must come on my travels, forsooth !”

Emily tried to sooth and to cheer her with a hope, in which she scarcely herself indulged.

“ How—how, ma’amfelle, could you leave France, and leave Monf. Valancourt, too ?” said Annette, sobbing. “ I—I—am sure, if Ludovico had been in France, I would never have left it.”

“ Why do you lament quitting France, then ?” said Emily, trying to smile, “ since, if you had remained there, you would not have found Ludovico.”

“ Ah, ma’amfelle ! I only wish I was out of this frightful castle, serving you in France, and I would care about nothing else !”

“ Thank you, my good Annette, for your affectionate regard, the time will come, I hope, when you may remember the expression of that wish with pleasure.”

Annette departed on her business, and Emily sought to lose the sense of her own cares, in the visionary scenes of the poet ; but she had again to lament the irresistible force of circumstances over the taste and powers of the mind ; and that it requires a spirit at ease to be sensible even to the abstract pleasures of pure intellect. The enthusiasm of genius, with all its pictured scenes, now appeared cold, and dim. As she mused upon the book before her, she involuntarily exclaimed, “ Are these, indeed, the passages, that have so often given me exquisite delight. Where did the charm exist ?—Was it in my mind, or in the imagination of the poet ? It lived in each,” said she pausing.

"But the fire of the poet is vain, if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own, however it may be inferior to his in power."

Emily would have pursued this train of thinking, because it relieved her from more painful reflection, but she found again, that thought cannot always be controlled by will; and hers returned to the consideration of her own situation.

In the evening, not choosing to venture down to the ramparts, where she would be exposed to the rude gaze of Montoni's associates, she walked for air in the gallery, adjoining her chamber; on reaching the further end of which she heard distant sounds of merriment and laughter. It was the wild uproar of riot, not the cheering gaiety of tempered mirth; and seemed to come from that part of the castle, where Montoni usually was. Such sounds, at this time, when her aunt had been so few days dead, particularly shocked her, consistent as they were with the late conduct of Montoni.

As she listened, she thought she distinguished female voices mingling with the laughter, and this confirmed her worst surmise concerning the character of Signora Livona and her companions. It was evident that they had not been brought hither by compulsion; and she beheld herself in the remote wilds of the Apennine, surrounded by men, whom she considered to be little less than ruffians, and their worst associates, amid scenes of vice, from which her soul recoiled in horror. It was at this moment, when the scenes of the present and the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution shook with dread. She thought she understood all the horrors, which Montoni was preparing for her, and shrunk from an encounter with such remorseless vengeance, as he could inflict. The disputed estates she now almost determined to yield at once, whenever he should again call upon her, that she might regain safety and freedom; but then, the remembrance of Valancourt would steal to her heart, and plunge her into the distractions of doubt.

She continued walking in the gallery, till evening threw its melancholy twilight through the painted casements, and deepened the gloom of the oak wainscoting around her; while the distant perspective of the corridor was so much obscured, as to be discernable only by the glimmering window, that terminated it.

Along the vaulted halls and passages below, peals of laughter echoed faintly, at intervals, to this remote part of the castle, and seemed to render the succeeding stillness more dreary. Emily, however, unwilling to return to her more forsorn chamber, whi-

ther Annette was not yet come, still paced the gallery. As she passed the door of the apartment, where she had once dared to lift the veil, which discovered to her a spectacle so horrible, that she had never after remembered it, but with emotions of indescribable awe, this remembrance suddenly recurred. It now brought with it reflections more terrible, than it had yet done, which the late conduct of Montoni occasioned; and, hastening to quit the gallery, while she had power to do so, she heard a sudden step behind her. It might be that of Annette; but, turning fearfully to look, she saw, through the gloom, a tall figure following her, and all the horrors of that chamber rushed upon her mind. In the next moment, she found herself clasped in the arms of some person, and heard a deep voice murmur in her ear.

When she had power to speak, or to distinguish articulated sounds, she demanded who detained her.

"It is I," replied the voice—"Why are you thus alarmed?"

She looked on the face of the person who spoke, but the feeble light that gleamed through the high casement at the end of the gallery, did not permit her to distinguish the features.

"Whoever you are," said Emily in a trembling voice, "for heaven's sake let me go!"

"My charming Emily," said the man, "why will you shut yourself up in this obscure place, when there is so much gaiety below? Return with me to the cedar parlour, where you will be the fairest ornament of the party; you shall not repent the exchange."

Emily disdained to reply, and still endeavoured to liberate herself.

"Promise, that you will come," he continued, "and I will release you immediately; but first give me a reward for so doing."

"Who are you?" demanded Emily, in a tone of mingled terror and indignation, while she still struggled for liberty—

"Who are you, that have the cruelty thus to insult me?"

"Why call me cruel?" said the man, "I would remove you from this dreary solitude to a merry party below. Do you not know me?"

Emily now faintly remembered, that he was one of the officers who were with Montoni when she attended him in the morning. "I thank you for the kindness of your intention," she replied, without appearing to understand him, "but I wish for nothing so much as that you would leave me."

"Charming Emily!" said he, "give up this foolish whim for solitude, and come with me to the company, and eclipse the

beauties, who make part of it ; you, only, are worthy of my love." He attempted to kiss her hand, but the strong impulse of her indignation gave her power to liberate herself, and she fled towards the chamber. She closed the door, before he reached it, having secured which, she sunk in a chair, overcome by terror and by the exertion she had made, while she heard his voice and his attempts to open the door, without having the power to raise herself. At length, she perceived him depart, and had remained, listening, for a considerable time, and was somewhat revived by not hearing any sound, when suddenly she remembered the door of the private staircase, and that he might enter that way, since it was fastened only on the other side. She then employed herself in endeavouring to secure it, in the manner she had formerly done. It appeared to her, that Montoni had already commenced his scheme of vengeance, by withdrawing from her his protection, and she repented of the rashness, that had made her brave the power of such a man.— To retain the estates seemed to be now utterly impossible, and to preserve her life, perhaps her honour, she resolved, if she should escape the horrors of this night, to give up all claims to the estates, on the morrow, provided Montoni would suffer her to depart from Udolpho.

When she had come to this decision, her mind became more composed, though she still anxiously listened, and often started at ideal sounds, that appeared to issue from the staircase.

Having sat in darkness for some hours, during all which time Annette did not appear, she began to have serious apprehensions for her ; but, not daring to venture down into the castle, was compelled to remain in uncertainty, as to the cause of this unusual absence.

Emily often stole to the staircase door, to listen if any step approached, but still no sound alarmed her : determining, however, to watch, during the night, she once more rested on her dark and desolate couch, and bathed the pillow with innocent tears. She thought of her deceased parents and then of the absent Valancourt, and frequently called upon their names ; for the profound stillness, that now reigned, was propitious to the musing sorrow of her mind.

While she thus remained, her ear suddenly caught the notes of distant music, to which she listened attentively, and soon perceiving this to be the instrument she had formerly heard at midnight, she rose, and stepped softly to the casement, to which the sounds appeared to come from a lower room,

In a few moments their soft melody was accompanied by a voice so full of pathos, that it evidently sang not of imaginary sorrows. Its sweet and peculiar tones she thought she had somewhere heard before ; yet, if this was not fancy, it was, at most, a very faint recollection. It stole over her mind, amidst the anguish of her present suffering, like a celestial strain, soothing and reassuring her ;—" Pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear, when he awakens from dreams of joy and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill*."

But her emotion can scarcely be imagined, when she heard sung, with the taste and simplicity of true feeling, one of the popular airs of her native province, to which she had so often listened with delight, when a child, and which she had so often heard her father repeat ! To this well known song, never till now, heard but in her native country, her heart melted, while, the memory of past times returned. The pleasant, peaceful, scenes of Gascony, the tenderness and goodness of her parents, the taste and simplicity of her former life—all rose to her fancy, and formed a picture, so sweet and glowing, so strikingly contrasted with the scenes, the characters and the dangers, which now surrounded her—that her mind could not bear to pause upon the retrospect, and shrunk at the acuteness of its own sufferings.

Her sighs were deep and convulsed ; she could no longer listen to the strain, that had so often charmed her to tranquillity, and she withdrew from the casement to a remote part of the chamber. But she was not yet beyond the reach of the music ; she heard the measure change, and the succeeding air called her again to the window, for she immediately recollected it to be the same she had formerly heard in the fishing house in Gascony. Assisted, perhaps, by the mystery, which had then accompanied this strain, it had made so deep an impression on her memory, that she had never since entirely forgotten it ; and the manner, in which it was now sung, convinced her, however unaccountable the circumstance appeared, that this was the same voice she had then heard. Surprise soon yielded to other emotions ; a thought darted, like lightning, upon her mind, which discovered a train of hopes, that revived all her spirits. Yet these hopes were so new, so unexpected, so astonishing, that she did not dare to trust, though she could not resolve to discourage them. She sat down by the casement, breathless, and overcome with the alternate emotions of hope and fear ; then rose again, leaned from the window, that she might catch a nearer sound, listened,

* Ossian.

now doubting and then believing, softly exclaimed the name of Valancourt, and then sunk again into the chair. Yes, it was possible, that Valancourt was near her, and she recollected circumstances, which induced her to believe it was his voice she had just heard. She remembered he had more than once said that the fishing house, where she had formerly listened to his voice and air, and where she had seen pencilled sonnets, addressed to herself, had been his favourite haunt, before he had been made known to her; there, too, she had herself unexpectedly met him. It appeared, from these circumstances, more than probable, that he was the musician, who had formerly charmed her attention, and the author of the lines, which had expressed such tender admiration;—who else, indeed could it be? She was unable at that time to form a conjecture, as to the writer, but, since her acquaintance with Valancourt, whenever he had mentioned the fishing house to have been known to him, she had not scrupled to believe that he was the author of the sonnets.

As these considerations passed over her mind, joy, fear and tenderness contended at her heart; she leaned again from the casement to catch the sounds, which might confirm, or destroy her hope, though she did not recollect to have ever heard him sing; but the voice, and the instrument, now ceased.

She considered for a moment whether she should venture to speak: then, not choosing, lest it should be he, to mention his name, and yet too much interested to neglect the opportunity of inquiring, she called from the casement, "Is that song from Gascony?" Her anxious attention was not cheered by any reply; every thing remained silent. Her impatience increasing with her fears, she repeated the question; but still no sound was heard, except the sighings of the wind among the battlements above; and she endeavoured to console herself with a belief, that the stranger, whoever he was, had retired, before she had spoken, beyond the reach of her voice, which it appeared certain, had Valancourt heard and recognized, he would instantly have replied to. Presently, however, she considered, that a motive of prudence and not an accidental removal might occasion his silence; but the surmise, that led to this reflection, suddenly changed her hope and joy to terror and grief; for, if Valancourt were in the castle, it was too probable, that he was here a prisoner, taken with some of his countrymen, many of whom were at that time engaged in the wars of Italy, or intercepted in some attempt to reach her. Had he even recollected Emily's voice, he would have feared, in these circumstances, to reply to it, in the presence of the men, who guarded his prison.

What so lately she had eagerly hoped she now believed she dreaded ;—dreaded to know that Valancourt was near her ; and, while she was anxious to be relieved from her apprehension for his safety, she still was unconscious, that a hope of soon seeing him, struggled with the fear.

She remained listening at the casement, till the air began to freshen, and one high mountain in the east to glimmer with the morning ; when, wearied with anxiety, she retired to her couch, where she found it utterly impossible to sleep, for joy, tenderness, doubt and apprehension, distracted her during the whole night. Now she rose from the couch, and opened the casement to listen ; then she would pace the room with impatient steps, and, at length, return with despondence to her pillow. Never did hours appear to move so heavily, as those of this anxious night ; after which she hoped that Annette might appear, and conclude her present state of torturing suspense.

C H A P. XXXII.

“ ——— might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'T would be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.”

MILTON.

IN the morning, Emily was relieved from her fears for Annette, who came at an early hour.

“ Here were fine doings in the castle, last night, ma’amfelle,” said she, as soon as she entered the room,—“ fine doings, indeed ! Was you not frightened, ma’amfelle, at not seeing me ?”

“ I was alarmed both on your account and on my own,” replied Emily—“ What detained you ?”

“ Aye, I said so, I told him so ; but it would not do. It was not my fault, indeed, ma’amfelle, for I could not get out. The rogue Ludovico locked me up again.”

“ Locked you up !” said Emily, with displeasure, “ Why do you permit Ludovico to lock you up ?”

“ Holy Saints !” exclaimed Annette, “ how can I help it ! If he will lock the door, ma’amfelle, and take away the key, how

am I to get out, unless I jump through the window? But that I should not mind so much, if the casements here were not all so high; one can hardly scramble up to them on the inside, and one should break one's neck, I suppose going down on the outside. But you know, I dare say, ma'am, what a hurly burly the castle was in, last night; you must have heard some of the uproar."

"What, were they disputing, then?" said Emily.

"No, ma'amselle, not fighting, but almost as good, for I believe there was not one of the Signors sober; and what is more, not one of those fine ladies sober, either. I thought, when I saw them first, that all those fine silks and fine veils,—why, ma'amselle, their veils were worked with silver! and fine trimmings—boded no good—I guessed what they were!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Emily, "what will become of me!"

"Aye, ma'am, Ludovico said much the same thing of me. Good God! said he, Annette, what is to become of you, if you are to go running about the castle among all these drunken Signors?"

"O! says I, for that matter I only want to go to my young lady's chamber, and I have only to go, you know, along the vaulted passage and across the great hall and up the marble staircase and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle, and I am in the corridor in a minute." "Are you so?" says he, and what is to become of you, if you meet any of those noble cavaliers in the way?" "Well, says I, if you think there is danger, then, go with me, and guard me; I am never afraid when you are by." "What! says he, when I am scarcely recovered of one wound, shall I put myself in the way of getting another? for if any of the cavaliers meet you, they will fall fighting with me directly. No, no, says he, I will cut the way shorter, than through the vaulted passage and up the marble staircase and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle, for you shall stay here, Annette; you shall not go out of this room, to night." "So, with that I says"—

"Well, well," said Emily, impatiently, and anxious to inquire on another subject,—“so he locked you up?”

"Yes, he did indeed, ma'amselle, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary; and Catarina and I and he staid there all night. And in a few minutes after I was not so vexed, for there came Signor Verezzi roaring along the passage, like a mad bull, and he mistook Ludovico's hall, for old Carlo's; so he tried to burst open the door, and called out for more wine, for that he had drunk all the flasks dry, and was dying of thirst."

So we were all as still as night, that he might suppose there was nobody in the room ; but the Signor was as cunning as the best of us, and kept calling out at the door, " Come forth, my ancient hero ! " said he, " here is no enemy at the gate, that you need hide yourself : come forth, my valorous Signor Steward ! " Just then old Carlo opened his door, and he came with a flask in his hand ; for, as soon as the Signor saw him, he was as tame as could be, and followed him away as naturally as a dog does a butcher with a piece of meat in his basket. All this I saw through the keyhole. " Well, Annette," said Ludovico, jeeringly, " shall I let you out now ? " " O no, says I, I would not."

" I have some questions to ask you on another subject," interrupted Emily, quite wearied by this story. " Do you know whether there are any prisoners in the castle, and whether they are confined at this end of the edifice ? "

" I was not in the way, ma'amselle," replied Annette, " when the first party came in from the mountains, and the last party is not come back yet, so I don't know, whether there are any prisoners ; but it is expected back to-night, or to-morrow, and I shall know then, perhaps."

Emily inquired if she had ever heard the servants talk of prisoners.

" Ah ma'amselle ! " said Annette archly, " now I dare say you are thinking of Monsieur Valancourt, and that he may have come among the armies, which, they say, are come from our country, to fight against this state, and that he has met with some of *our* people, and is taken captive. O Lord ! how glad I should be, if it was so ! "

" Would you, indeed, be glad ? " said Emily, in a tone of mournful reproach.

" To be sure I should, ma'am," replied Annette, " and would not you be glad too, to see Signor Valancourt ? I don't know any chevalier I like better, I have a very great regard for the Signor, truly."

" Your regard for him cannot be doubted," said Emily, " since you wish to see him a prisoner."

" Why no, ma'amselle, not a prisoner either ; but one must be glad to see him, you know. And it was only the other night I dreamt—I dreamt I saw him drive into the castle yard all in a coach and six, and dressed out with a laced coat and a sword, like a lord as he is."

Emily could not forbear smiling at Annette's ideas of Valancourt, and repeated her inquiry, whether she had heard the servants talk of prisoners.

"No, ma'amselle," replied she, "never; and lately they have done nothing but talk of the apparition, that has been walking about of a night on the ramparts, and that frightened the sentinels into fits. It came among them like a flash of fire, they say, and they all fell down in a row, till they came to themselves again; and then it was gone, and nothing to be seen but the old castle walls; so they helped one another up again as fast as they could. You would not believe ma'amselle though I shewed you the very cannon, where it used to appear."

"And are you, indeed, so simple, Annette," said Emily, smiling at this curious exaggeration of the circumstance she had witnessed, "as to credit these stories?"

"Credit them, ma'amselle! why all the world could not persuade me out of them. Roberto and Sebastian and half a dozen more of them went into fits! To be sure, there was no occasion for that; I said, myself, there was no need of that, for, says I, when the enemy comes, what a pretty figure they will cut, if they are to fall down in fits, all of a row! The enemy won't be so civil, perhaps, as to walk off, like the ghost, and leave them to help one another up, but will fall to, cutting and slashing, till he makes them all rise up dead men. No, no, says I, there is reason in all things: though I might have fallen down in a fit, that was no rule for them, being, because it is no business of mine to look gruff, and fight battles."

Emily endeavoured to correct the superstitious weakness of Annette, though she could not entirely subdue her own; to which the latter only replied, "Nay, ma'amselle, you will believe nothing; you are almost as bad as the Signor himself, who was in a great passion when they told him of what had happened, and swore that the first man who repeated such nonsense should be thrown into the dungeon under the east turret. This was a hard punishment too, for only talking nonsense, as he called it, but I dare say he had other reasons for calling it so, than you have, ma'am."

Emily looked displeased, and made no reply. As she mused upon the recollected appearance, which had lately so much alarmed her, and considered the circumstances of the figure having stationed itself opposite to her casement, she was for a moment inclined to believe it was Valancourt, whom she had seen. Yet, if it was he, why did he not speak to her when he had the opportunity of doing so—and if he was a prisoner in the castle, and he could be here in no other character, how could he obtain the means of walking abroad on the rampart? Thus she was utterly

unable to decide, whether the musician and the form she had observed, were the same, or if they were, whether this was Valancourt. She, however, desired that Annette would endeavour to learn whether any prisoners were in the castle, and also their names.

"O dear, ma'amselle!" said Annette, "I forgot to tell you what you bade me ask about the ladies, as they call themselves, who are lately come to Udolpho. Why that Signora Livona, that the Signor brought to see my late lady at Venice, is his mistress now, and was little better then, I dare say. And Ludovico says, but pray be secret, ma'am, that his *Excellenza* introduced her only to impose upon the world, that had begun to make free with her character. So when people saw my lady notice her, they thought what they had heard must be scandal. The other two are the mistresses of Signor Verezzi and Signor Bertolini; and Signor Montoni invited them all to the castle; and so, yesterday he gave a great entertainment; and there they were, all drinking Tuscany wine and all sorts, and laughing and singing, till they made the castle ring again. But I thought they were diabolical sounds, so soon after my poor lady's death too; and they brought to my mind what she would have thought, if she had heard them—but she cannot hear them now, poor soul! said I."

Emily turned away to conceal her emotion, and then desired Annette to go, and make inquiry, concerning the prisoners, that might be in the castle, but conjured her to do it with caution, and on no account to mention her name, or that of Monsieur Valancourt.

"Now I think of it ma'amselle," said Annette, "I do believe there are prisoners, for I overheard one of the Signor's men yesterday, in the servants' hall, talking something about ransoms, and saying what a fine thing it was for his *Excellenza* to catch up men, and they were as good booty as any other, because of the ransoms. And the other man was grumbling, and saying it was fine enough for the Signor, but none so fine for his soldiers, because, said he, we don't go shares there."

This information heightened Emily's impatience to know more, and Annette immediately departed on her inquiry.

The late resolution of Emily to resign her estates to Montoni, now gave way to new considerations; the possibility, that Valancourt was near her, revived her fortitude, and she determined to brave the threatened vengeance, at least, till she could be assured whether he was really in the castle. She was in this temper of mind when she received a message from Montoni, requir-

ing her attendance in the cedar parlour, which she obeyed with trembling, and, on her way thither, endeavoured to animate her fortitude with the idea of Valancourt.

Montoni was alone. "I sent for you," said he, "to give you another opportunity of retracting your late mistaken assertions concerning the Languedoc estates. I will condescend to advise, where I may command.—If you are really deluded by an opinion, that you have any right to these estates, at least, do not persist in the error—an error, which you may perceive, too late, has been fatal to you. Dare my resentment no further, but sign the papers."

"If I have no right in these estates, sir," said Emily, "of what service can it be to you, that I should sign any papers, concerning them? If the lands are yours by law, you certainly may possess them, without my interference, or my consent."

"I will have no more argument," said Montoni, with a look that made her tremble: "What had I but trouble to expect, when I condescended to reason with a baby! But I will be trifled with no longer: let the recollection of your aunt's sufferings in consequence of her folly and obstinacy, teach you a lesson.—Sign the papers."

Emily's resolution was for a moment awed:—she shrunk at the recollections he revived, and from the vengeance he threatened; but then, the image of Valancourt, who so long had loved her, and who was now, perhaps so near her, came to her heart, and, together with the strongest feelings of indignation, with which she had always from her infancy, regarded an act of injustice, inspired her with a noble, though imprudent, courage.

"Sign the papers," said Montoni, more impatiently than before.

"Never sir," replied Emily; "that request would have proved to me the injustice of your claim, had I even been ignorant of my right."

Montoni turned pale with anger, while his quivering lip and lurking eye made her almost repent the boldness of her speech.

"Then all my vengeance falls upon you," he exclaimed, with an horrible oath. "And think not it shall be delayed. Neither the estates in Languedoc, or Gascony, shall be yours; you have dared to question my right,—now dare to question my power. I have a punishment which you think not of; it is terrible! This night—this very night!"

"This night!" repeated another voice.

Montoni paused, and turned half round, but, seeming to recollect himself he proceeded in a lower tone,

"You have lately seen one terrible example of obstinacy and folly ; yet this, it appears, has not been sufficient to deter you. I could tell you of others—I could make you tremble at the bare recital."

He was interrupted by a groan, which seemed to rise from underneath the chamber they were in ; and, as he threw a glance round it, impatience and rage flashed from his eyes, yet something like a shade of fear passed over his countenance. Emily sat down in a chair near the door, for the various emotions she had suffered, now almost overcame her ; but Montoni paused scarcely an instant, and, commanding his features, resumed his discourse in a lower, yet sterner voice.

"I say, I could give you other instances of my power and of my character, which it seems you do not understand, or you would not defy me. I could tell you, that, when once my resolution is taken—but I am talking to a baby. Let me, however, repeat, that terrible as are the example I could recite, the recital could not now benefit you ; for, though your repentance would put an immediate end to opposition, it would not now appease my indignation.—I will have vengeance as well as justice."

Another groan filled the pause which Montoni made.

"Leave the room instantly !" said he, seeming not to notice this strange occurrence. Without power to implore his pity, she rose to go, but found that she could not support herself ; awe and terror overcame her, and she sunk again into the chair.

"Quit my presence !" cried Montoni. "This affectation of fear ill becomes the heroine who has just dared to brave my indignation."

"Did you hear nothing Signor ?" said Emily, trembling, and still unable to leave the room.

"I heard my own voice," rejoined Montoni, sternly.

"And nothing else ?" said Emily, speaking with difficulty.—

"There again ! Do you hear nothing now ?"

"Obey my order," repeated Montoni. "And for these fool's tricks—I will soon discover by whom they are practised."

Emily again rose, and exerted herself to the utmost to leave the room, while Montoni followed her ; but, instead of calling aloud to his servants to search the chamber, as he had formerly done on a similar occurrence, passed to the ramparts.

As, in her way to the corridor, she rested for a moment at an open casement, Emily saw a party of Montoni's troops winding down a distant mountain, whom she noticed no further, than as

they brought to her mind the wretched prisoners they were, perhaps, bringing to the castle. At length, having reached her apartment, she threw herself upon a couch, overcome with the new horrors of her situation. Her thoughts lost in tumult and perplexity, she could neither repent of, or approve, her late conduct; she could only remember, that she was in the power of a man, who had no principle of action—but his will; and the astonishment and terrors of superstition, which had, for a moment, so strongly assailed her, now yielded to those of reason.

She was, at length, roused from the reverie, which engaged her, by a confusion of distant voices, and a clattering of hoofs, that seemed to come, on the wind, from the courts. A sudden hope, that some good was approaching, seized her mind, till she remembered the troops she had observed from the casement, and concluded this to be the party, which Annette had said were expected at Udolpho.

Soon after, she heard voices faintly from the halls, and the noise of horses' feet sunk away in the wind; silence ensued. Emily listened anxiously for Annette's step in the corridor, but a pause of total stillness continued, till again the castle seemed to be all tumult and confusion. She heard the echoes of many footsteps, passing to and fro in the halls and avenues below, and then busy tongues were loud on the rampart. Having hurried to her casement, she perceived Montoni, with some of his officers, leaning on the walls, and pointing from them; while several soldiers were employed at the further end of the rampart about some cannon; and she continued to observe them, carelessly of the passing time.

Annette at length appeared, but brought no intelligence of Valancourt, "For, ma'amfelle," said she, "all the people pretend to know nothing about any prisoners. But here is a fine piece of business! The rest of the party are just arrived, ma'am; they came scampering in, as if they would have broken their necks; one scarcely knew whether the man, or his horse would get within the gates first. And they have brought word—and such news! they have brought word, that a party of the enemy, as they call them, are coming towards the castle; so we shall have all the officers of justice, I suppose, besieging it! all those terrible looking fellows one used to see at Venice."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Emily, fervently, "there is yet a hope left for me, then!"

"What mean you, ma'amfelle? Do you wish to fall into the hands of those sad looking men! Why I used to shudder as I

passed them, and should have guessed what they were, if Ludovico had not told me."

"We cannot be in worse hands than at present," replied Emily, unguardedly; "but what reason have you to suppose these are officers of justice?"

"Why *our* people, ma'am, are all in such a fright, and a fuss; and I don't know any thing but the fear of justice, that could make them so. I used to think nothing on earth could fluster them, unless, indeed, it was a ghost, or so; but now, some of them are for hiding down in the vaults under the castle; but you must not tell the Signor this, ma'amselle, and I overheard two of them talking—Holy Mother! what makes you look so sad, ma'amselle? You don't hear what I say!"

"Yes, I do, Annette! pray proceed."

"Well, ma'amselle, all the castle is in such hurly burly.—Some of the men are loading the cannon, and some are examining the great gates, and the walls all round, and are hammering and patching up, just as if all those repairs had never been made, that were so long about. But what is to become of me and you, ma'amselle, and Ludovico? O! when I hear the sound of the cannon, I shall die with fright. If I could but catch the great gate open for one minute, I would be even with it for shutting me within these walls so long!—it should never see me again."

Emily caught the latter words of Annette. "O! if you could find it open, but for one moment!" she exclaimed, "my peace might yet be saved!" The heavy groan she uttered, and the wildness of her look, terrified Annette, still more than her words; who entreated Emily to explain the meaning of them, to whom it suddenly occurred, that Ludovico might be of some service, if there should be a possibility of escape, and who repeated the substance of what had passed between Montoni and herself, but conjured her to mention this to no person except to Ludovico. "It may, perhaps, be in his power," she added, "to effect our escape. Go to him, Annette, tell him what I have to apprehend, and what I have already suffered; but entreat him to be secret, and to lose no time in attempting to release us. If he is willing to undertake this he shall be amply rewarded. I cannot speak with him myself, for we might be observed, and then effectual care would be taken to prevent our flight. But be quick, Annette, and, above all be discreet—I will await your return in this apartment."

The girl, whose honest heart had been much affected by the recital, was now as eager to obey, as Emily was to employ her, and she immediately quitted the room.

Emily's surprise increased, as she reflected upon Annette's intelligence. "Alas!" said she, "what can the officers of justice do against an armed castle? these cannot be such." Upon further consideration, however, she concluded, that, Montoni's bands having plundered the country round, the inhabitants had taken arms, and were coming with the officers of police and a party of soldiers, to force their way into the castle. "But they know not," thought she, "its strength, or the armed numbers within it. Alas! except from flight, I have nothing to hope!"

Montoni, though not precisely what Emily apprehended him to be—a captain of banditti—had employed his troops in enterprises not less daring, or less atrocious, than such a character would have undertaken. They had not only pillaged, whenever opportunity offered, the helpless traveller, but had attacked, and plundered the villas of several persons, which, being situated among the solitary recesses of the mountains, were totally unprepared for resistance. In these expeditions the commanders of the party did not appear, and the men, partly disguised, had sometimes been mistaken for common robbers, and, at others, for bands of the foreign enemy, who, at that period, invaded the country. But, though they had already pillaged several mansions, and brought home considerable treasures, they had ventured to approach only one castle, in the attack of which they were assisted by other troops of their own order; from this, however, they were vigorously repulsed, and pursued by some of the foreign enemy, who were in league with the besieged. Montoni's troops fled precipitately towards Udolpho, but were so closely tracked over the mountains, that, when they reached one of the heights in the neighbourhood of the castle, and looked back upon the road, they perceived the enemy winding among the cliffs below, and at not more than a league distant. Upon this discovery, they hastened forward with increased speed, to prepare Montoni for the enemy; and it was their arrival, which had thrown the castle into such confusion and tumult.

As Emily awaited anxiously some information from below, she now saw from her casements a body of troops pour over the neighbouring heights; and, though Annette had been gone a very short time, and had a difficult and dangerous business to accomplish, her impatience for intelligence became painful: she listened; opened her door; and often went out upon the corridor to meet her.

At length, she heard a footstep approach her chamber; and, on opening the door, saw, not Annette, but old Carlo! New

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fears rushed upon her mind. He said he came from the Signor, who had ordered him to inform her, that she must be ready to depart from Udolpho immediately, for that the castle was about to be besieged; and that mules were preparing to convey her, with her guides, to a place of safety.

"Of safety!" exclaimed Emily, thoughtlessly; "has, then, the Signor so much consideration for me?"

Carlo looked upon the ground, and made no reply. A thousand opposite emotions agitated Emily, successively, as she listened to old Carlo; those of joy, grief, distrust and apprehension, appeared, and vanished from her mind, with the quickness of lightning. One moment, it seemed impossible, that Montoni could take this measure merely for her preservation; and so very strange was his sending her from the castle at all, that she could attribute it only to the design of carrying into execution the new scheme of vengeance, with which he had menaced her. In the next instant, it appeared so desirable to quit the castle, under any circumstances, that she could not but rejoice in the prospect, believing that change must be for the better, till she remembered the probability of Valancourt being detained in it, when sorrow and regret usurped her mind, and she wished, much more fervently than she had yet done, that it might not be his voice which she had heard.

Carlo having reminded her, that she had no time to lose, for that the enemy were within sight of the castle, Emily entreated him to inform her whither she was to go; and, after some hesitation, he said he had received no orders to tell; but, on her repeating the question, replied, that he believed she was to be carried into Tuscany.

"To Tuscany!" exclaimed Emily—"and why thither?"

Carlo answered, that he knew nothing further, than that she was to be lodged in a cottage on the borders of Tuscany, at the feet of the Apennines—"Not a day's journey distant," said he.

Emily now dismissed him; and, with trembling hands, prepared the small package, that she meant to take with her; while she was employed about which Annette returned.

"O ma'amse!" said she, "nothing can be done! Ludovico says the new porter is more watchful even than Barnardine was, and we might as well throw ourselves in the way of a dragon, as in his. Ludovico is almost as broken hearted as you are, ma'am, on my account, he says, and I am sure I shall never live to hear the cannon fire twice!"

She now began to weep, but revived upon hearing of what had just occurred, and entreated Emily to take her with her.

"That I will do most willingly," replied Emily, "if Signor Montoni permits it;" to which Annette made no reply, but ran out of the room, and immediately sought Montoni, who was on the terrace, surrounded by his officers, where she began her petition. He sharply bade her go into the castle, and absolutely refused her request. Annette, however, not only pleaded for herself, but for Ludovico; and Montoni had ordered some of his men to take her from his presence, before she would retire.

In an agony of disappointment, she returned to Emily, who foreboded little good towards herself, from this refusal to Annette, and who, soon after, received a summons to repair to the great court, where the mules, with their guides, were in waiting.—Emily here tried in vain to sooth the weeping Annette, who persisted in saying, that she should never see her dear young lady again; a fear, which her mistress secretly thought too well justified, but which she endeavoured to restrain, while, with apparent composure, she bade this affectionate servant farewell.—Annette, however, followed to the courts, which were now thronged with people, busy in preparation for the enemy; and, having seen her mount her mule and depart, with her attendants, through the portal, turned into the castle and wept again.

Emily, meanwhile, as she looked back upon the gloomy courts of the castle, no longer silent as when she had first entered them, but resounding with the noise of preparation for their defence, as well as crowded with soldiers and workmen, hurrying to and fro; and, when she passed once more under the huge portcullis, which had formerly struck her with terror and dismay; and, looking round, saw no walls to confine her steps—felt, in spite of anticipation, the sudden joy of a prisoner, who unexpectedly finds himself at liberty. This emotion would not suffer her now to look impartially on the dangers that awaited her without; on mountains infested by hostile parties, who seized every opportunity for plunder; and on a journey commenced under the guidance of men, whose countenances certainly did not speak favourably of their dispositions. In the present moments, she could only rejoice, that she was liberated from those walls, which she had entered with such dismal forebodings; and, remembering the superstitious presentiment, which had then seized her, she could now smile at the impression it had made upon her mind.

As she gazed, with these emotions, upon the turrets of the castle, rising high over the woods, among which she wound, the stranger, whom she believed to be confined there, returned to her remembrance, and anxiety and apprehension, lest he should be

Valancourt, again passed like a cloud upon her joy. She recollected every circumstance, concerning this unknown person, since the night, when she had first heard him play the song of her native province ;—circumstances, which she had so often recollected, and compared before, without extracting from them any thing like conviction, and which still only prompted her to believe, that Valancourt was a prisoner at Udolpho. It was possible, however, that the men, who were her conductors, might afford her information, on this subject ; but, fearing to question them immediately, lest they should be unwilling to discover any circumstance to her in the presence of each other, she watched for an opportunity of speaking with them separately.

Soon after, a trumpet echoed faintly from a distance ; the guides stopped, and looked toward the quarter whence it came, but the thick woods, which surrounded them, excluding all view of the country beyond, one of the men rode on to the point of an eminence, that afforded a more extensive prospect, to observe how near the enemy, whose trumpet he guessed this to be, were advanced ; the other, meanwhile, remained with Emily, and to him she put some questions, concerning the stranger at Udolpho. Ugo, for this was his name, said, that there were several prisoners in the castle, but he neither recollected their persons, or the precise time of their arrival, and could therefore give her no information. There was a surliness in his manner, as he spoke, that made it probable he would not have satisfied her inquiries, even if he could have done so.

Having asked him what prisoners had been taken, about the time, as nearly as she could remember, when she had first heard the music, “ All that week,” said, Ugo, ‘ I was out with a party, upon the mountains, and knew nothing of what was doing at the castle. We had enough upon our hands, we had warm work of it.’

Bertrand, the other man, being now returned, Emily inquired no further, and when he had related to his companion, what he had seen, they travelled on in deep silence ; while Emily often caught, between the opening woods, partial glimpses of the castle above—the west towers, whose battlements were now crowded with archers, and the ramparts below, where soldiers were seen hurrying along, or busy upon the walls, preparing the cannon.

Having emerged from the woods, they wound along the valley in an opposite direction to that, from whence the enemy were approaching. Emily had now a full view of Udolpho, with its gray walls, towers and terraces, high over topping the precipices

and the dark woods, and glittering partially with the arms of the *condottieri*, as the sun's rays, streaming through an autumnal cloud, glanced upon a part of the edifice, whose remaining features stood in darkened majesty. She continued to gaze, through her tears, upon walls that, perhaps, confined Valancourt, and which now, as the cloud floated away, were lighted up with sudden splendour, and then, as suddenly were shrouded in gloom; while the passing gleam fell on the wood tops below, and heightened the first tints of autumn, that had begun to steal upon the foliage. The winding mountains, at length, shut Udolpho from her view, and she turned, with mournful reluctance, to other objects. The melancholy sighing of the wind among the pines, that waved high over the steep, and the distant thunder of a torrent assailed her musings, and conspired with the wild scenery around, to diffuse over her mind emotions solemn, yet not unpleasing, but which were soon interrupted by the distant roar of cannon, echoing among the mountains. The sounds rolled along the wind, and were repeated in faint and fainter reverberation, till they sunk in sullen murmurs. This was a signal, that the enemy had reached the castle, and fear for Valancourt again tormented Emily. She turned her anxious eyes towards that part of the country, where the edifice stood, but the intervening heights concealed it from her view; still, however, she saw the tall head of a mountain, which immediately fronted her late chamber, and on this she fixed her gaze, as if it could have told her of all that was passing in the scene it overlooked. The guides twice reminded her, that she was losing time and that they had far to go, before she could turn from this interesting object, and, even when she again moved onward, she often sent a look back, till only its blue point, brightening in a gleam of sunshine, appeared peeping over other mountains.

The sound of the cannon affected Ugo, as the blast of the trumpet does the war horse; it called forth all the fire of his nature; he was impatient to be in the midst of the fight, and uttered frequent execrations against Montoni for having sent him to a distance. The feelings of his comrade seemed to be very opposite, and adapted rather to the cruelties, than to the dangers of war.

Emily asked frequent questions, concerning the place of her destination, but could only learn, that she was going to a cottage in Tuscany; and, whenever she mentioned the subject, she fancied she perceived, in the countenances of these men, an expression of malice and cunning, that alarmed her.

It was afternoon, when they had left the castle. During several hours, they travelled through regions of profound solitude, where no bleat of sheep, or bark of watch dog, broke on silence, and they were now too far off to hear even the faint thunder of the cannon. Towards evening, they wound down precipices, black with forests of cypress, pine and cedar, into a glen so savage and secluded, that, if Solitude ever had local habitation, this might have been "her place of dearest residence." To Emily it appeared a spot exactly suited for the retreat of banditti, and, in her imagination, she already saw them lurking under the brow of some projecting rock, whence their shadows, lengthened by the setting sun, stretched across the road, and warned the traveller of his danger. She shuddered at the idea, and, looking at her conductors, to observe whether they were armed, thought she saw in them the banditti she dreaded!

It was in this glen, that they proposed to alight, "For," said Ugo, "night will come on presently, and then the wolves will make it dangerous to stop." This was a new subject of alarm to Emily, but inferior to what she suffered from the thought of being left in these wilds, at midnight, with two such men as her present conductors. Dark and dreadful hints of what might be Montoni's purpose in sending her hither, came to her mind. She endeavoured to dissuade the men from stopping, and inquired with anxiety, how far they had yet to go.

"Many leagues yet," replied Bertrand. "As for you, Signora, you may do as you please about eating, but for us, we will make a hearty supper, while we can. We shall have need of it, I warrant, before we finish our journey. The sun's going down apace; let us alight under that rock, yonder."

His comrade assented, and, turning the mules out of the road, they advanced towards a cliff, overhung with cedars, Emily following in trembling silence. They lifted her from her mule, and, having seated themselves on the grass, at the foot of the rocks, drew some homely fare from a wallet, of which Emily tried to eat a little, the better to disguise her apprehensions.

The sun was now sunk behind the high mountains in the west, upon which a purple haze began to spread, and the gloom of twilight to draw over the surrounding objects. To the low and fullen murmur of the breeze, passing among the woods, she no longer listened with any degree of pleasure, for it conspired with the wildness of the scene and the evening hour, to depress her spirits.

Suspense had so much increased her anxiety, as to the prisoner at Udolpho, that, finding it impracticable to speak alone with

Bertrand, on that subject, she renewed her questions in the presence of Ugo ; but he either was, or pretended to be, entirely ignorant, concerning the stranger. When he had dismissed the question, he talked with Ugo on some subject, which led to the mention of Signor Orsino and of the affair that had banished him from Venice ; respecting which Emily had ventured to ask a few questions.—Ugo appeared to be well acquainted with the circumstances of that tragical event, and related some minute particulars, that both shocked and surprised her ; for it appeared very extraordinary how such particulars could be known to any, but to persons present when the assassination was committed.

“ He was of rank,” said Bertrand, “ or the State would not have troubled itself to inquire after his assassins. The Signor has been lucky hitherto ; this is not the first affair of the kind he has had upon his hands ; and to be sure, when a gentleman has no other way of getting redress—why he must take this.”

“ Aye,” said Ugo, “ and why is not this as good as another ? This is the way to have justice done at once, without more ado. If you go to law, you must stay till the judges please, and may lose your cause at last. Why the best way, then, is to make sure of your right, while you can, and execute justice yourself.”

“ Yes, yes,” rejoined Bertrand, “ if you wait till justice is done you—you may stay long enough. Why if I want a friend of mine properly served, how am I to get my revenge ? Ten to one they will tell me he is in the right, and I am in the wrong. Or, if a fellow has got possession of property which I think ought to be mine, why I may wait, till I starve, perhaps, before the law will give it me, and then, after all, the judge may say—the estate is his. What is to be done then ?—Why the case is plain enough, I must take it at last.”

Emily’s horror at this conversation was heightened by a suspicion, that the latter part of it was pointed against herself, and that these men had been commissioned by Montoni to execute a similar kind of *justice*, in his cause.

“ But I was speaking of Signor Orsino,” resumed Bertrand, “ he is one of those who love to do justice at once. I remember about ten years ago, the Signor had a quarrel with a cavalier of Milan. The story was told me then, and it is still fresh in my head. They quarrelled about a lady, that the Signor liked, and she was perverse enough to prefer the gentleman of Milan, and even carried her whim so far as to marry him. This provoked the Signor, as well it might, for he had tried to talk reason to her a long while, and used to send people to serenade her, un-

der her windows of a night ; and used to make verses about her, and would swear she was the handsomest lady in Milan—But all would not do—nothing would bring her to reason ; and, as I said, she went so far at last, as to marry this other cavaliero. This made the Signor wrath, with a vengeance ; he resolved to be even with her though, and he watched his opportunity, and did not wait long, for, soon after the marriage, they set out for Padua, nothing doubting, I warrant, of what was preparing for them. The cavaliero thought, to be sure, he was to be called to no account, but was to go off triumphant ; but he was soon made to know another sort of story."

"What then, the lady had promised to have Signor Orfino?" said Ugo.

"Promised ! No," replied Bertrand, "she had not wit enough even to tell him she liked him, as I heard, but the contrary, for she used to say, from the first, she never meant to have him. And this was what provoked the Signor, so, and with good reason, for, who likes to be told that he is disagreeable ? and this was saying as good. It was enough to tell him this ; she need not have gone and married another."

"What, she married, then, on purpose to plague the Signor?" said Ugo.

"I don't know as for that," replied Bertrand, "they said, indeed, that she had had a regard for the other gentleman a great while ; but that is nothing to the purpose, she should not have married him, and then the Signor would not have been so much provoked. She might have expected what was to follow ; it was not to be supposed he would bear her ill usage tamely, and she might thank herself for what happened. But, as I said, they set out for Padua, she and her husband, and the road lay over some barren mountains like these. This suited the Signor's purpose well. He watched the time of their departure, and sent his men after them with directions what to do. They kept their distance till they saw their opportunity, and this did not happen till the second day's journey, when, the gentleman having sent his servants forward to the next town, may be to have horses in readiness, the Signor's men quickened their pace, and overtook the carriage, in a hollow, between two mountains, where the woods prevented the servants from seeing what passed, though they were then not far off. When we came up, we fired our tromboni, but missed."

Emily turned pale, at these words, and then hoped she had mistaken them ; while Bertrand proceeded :

"The gentleman fired again, but he was soon made to alight and it was as he turned to call his people, that he was struck. It was the most dexterous feat you ever saw—he was struck in the back with three filletos at once. He fell, and was dispatched in a minute; but the lady escaped, for the servants had heard the firing, and came up before she could be taken care of. 'Bertrand,' said the Signor, when his men returned"——

"Bertrand!" exclaimed Emily, pale with horror, on whom not a syllable of this narrative had been lost.

"Bertrand, did I say?" rejoined the man, with some confusion—"No, Giovanni. But I have forgot where I was;—" 'Bertrand,' said the Signor"——

"Bertrand, again!" said Emily, in a faltering voice, "Why do you repeat that name?"

Bertrand swore. "What signifies it," he proceeded "what the man was called—Bertrand, or Giovanni—or Roberto? it's all one for that. You have put me out twice with that—question. 'Bertrand,' or Giovanni—or what you will—" 'Bertrand,' said the Signor, 'if your comrades had done their duty, as well as you, I should not have lost the lady. Go, my honest fellow, and be happy with this.' He gave him a purse of gold—and little enough too, considering the service he had done him."

"Aye, aye," said Ugo, "little enough—little enough."

Emily now breathed with difficulty, and could scarcely support herself. When first she saw these men, their appearance, and their connection with Montoni had been sufficient to impress her with distrust; but now, when one of them had betrayed himself to be a murderer, and she saw herself, at the approach of night, under his guidance, among wild and solitary mountains, and going she scarcely knew whither, the most agonizing terror seized her, which was the less supportable from the necessity she found herself under of concealing all symptoms of it from her companions. Reflecting on the character and the menaces of Montoni, it appeared not improbable, that he had delivered her to them, for the purpose of having her murdered, and of thus securing to himself, without further opposition or delay, the estates, for which he had so long and so desperately contended. Yet, if this was his design, there appeared no necessity for sending her to such a distance from the castle; for, if any dread of discovery had made him unwilling to perpetrate the deed there, a much nearer place might have sufficed for the purpose of concealment. These considerations, however, did not immediately occur to Emily, with whom so many circum-

stances conspired to rouse terror, that she had no power to oppose it, or to inquire coolly into its grounds; and, if she had done so, still there were many appearances which would too well have justified her most terrible apprehensions. She did not now dare to speak to her conductors, at the sound of whose voices she trembled; and when, now and then, she stole a glance at them, their countenances, seen imperfectly through the gloom of evening, served to confirm her fears.

The sun had now been set sometime; heavy clouds, whose lower skirts were tinged with sulphureous crimson, lingered in the west, and threw a reddish tint upon the pine forests, which sent forth a solemn sound, as the breeze rolled over them. The hollow moan struck upon Emily's heart, and served to render more gloomy and terrific every object around her,—the mountains, shaded in twilight—the gleaming torrent, hoarsely roaring—the black forests, and the deep glen, broken into rocky recesses, high overshadowed by cypress and sycamore and winding into long obscurity. To this glen, Emily, as she sent forth her anxious eye, thought there was no end; no hamlet, or even cottage, was seen, and still no distant bark of watch dog, or even faint, far off halloo came on the wind. In a tremulous voice, she now ventured to remind the guides, that it was growing late, and to ask again how far they had to go: but they were too much occupied by their own discourse to attend to her question, which she forbore to repeat, lest it should provoke a surly answer. Having, however, soon after, finished their supper, the men collected the fragments into their wallet, and proceeded along this winding glen, in gloomy silence; while Emily again mused upon her own situation, and concerning the motives of Montoni for involving her in it. That it was for some evil purpose towards herself, she could not doubt; and it seemed, that, if he did not intend to destroy her, with a view of immediately seizing her estates, he meant to reserve her a while in concealment, for some more terrible design, for one that might equally gratify his avarice and still more his deep revenge. At this moment, remembering Signor Brochio and his behaviour in the corridor, a few preceding nights, the latter supposition, horrible as it was, strengthened in her belief. Yet, why remove her from the castle, where deeds of darkness had, she feared, been often executed with secrecy?—from chambers, perhaps

“With many a foul, and midnight murder slain’d.”

The dread of what she might be going to encounter was now so excessive, that it sometimes threatened her senses; and, often as she went, she thought of her late father and of all he would have suffered, could he have foreseen the strange and dreadful events of her future life; and how anxiously he would have avoided that fatal confidence, which committed his daughter to the care of a woman so weak as was Madame Montoni. So romantic and improbable indeed, did her present situation appear to Emily herself, particularly when she compared it with the repose and beauty of her early days, that there were moments, when she could almost have believed herself the victim of frightful visions, glaring upon a disordered fancy.

Restrained by the presence of her guides from expressing her terrors, their acuteness was, at length, lost in gloomy despair. The dreadful view of what might await her hereafter rendered her almost indifferent to the surrounding dangers. She now looked, with little emotion, on the wild dingles, and the gloomy road and mountains, whose outlines only were distinguishable through the dusk;—objects, which but lately had affected her spirits so much, as to awaken horrid views of the future, and to tinge these with their own gloom.

It was now so nearly dark, that the travellers, who proceeded only by the slowest pace, could scarcely discern their way. The clouds, which seemed charged with thunder, passed slowly along the heavens, shewing, at intervals, the trembling stars; while the groves of cypress and sycamore, that overhung the rocks, waved high in the breeze, as it swept over the glen, and then rushed among the distant woods. Emily shivered as it passed.

“Where is the torch?” said Ugo, “It grows dark.”

“Not so dark yet,” replied Bertrand, “but we may find our way, and ’tis best not light the torch, before we can help, for it may betray us, if any struggling party of the enemy is abroad.”

Ugo muttered something, which Emily did not understand, and they proceeded in darkness, while she almost wished, that the enemy might discover them; for from change there was something to hope, since she could scarcely imagine any situation more dreadful than her present one.

As they moved slowly along, her attention was surprised by a thin tapering flame, that appeared, by fits, at the point of the pike, which Bertrand carried, resembling what she had observed on the lance of the sentinel, the night Madame Montoni died, and which he had said was an omen. The event immediately following it appeared to justify the assertion, and a superstitious

impression had remained on Emily's mind, which the present appearance confirmed. She thought it was an omen of her own fate, and watched it successively vanish and return, in gloomy silence, which was at length interrupted by Bertrand.

"Let us light the torch," said he, "and get under shelter of the woods;—a storm is coming on—look at my lance."

He held it forth, with the flame tapering at its point*.

"Aye," said Ugo, "you are not one of those, that believe in omens: we have left cowards at the castle, who would turn pale at such a sight, I have often seen it before a thunder storm, it is an omen of that, and one is coming now, sure enough. The clouds flash fast already."

Emily was relieved by this conversation from some of the terrors of superstition, but those of reason increased, as, waiting while Ugo searched for a flint, to strike fire, she watched the pale lightning gleam over the woods they were about to enter, and illuminate the harsh countenances of her companions. Ugo could not find a flint, and Bertrand became impatient, for the thunder sounded hollowly at a distance, and the lightning was more frequent. Sometimes, it revealed the nearer recesses of the woods, or, displaying some opening in their summits, illuminated the ground beneath with partial splendour, the thick foliage of the trees preserving the surrounding scene in deep shadow.

At length, Ugo found a flint, and the torch was lighted. The men then dismounted, and, having assisted Emily, led the mules towards the woods, that skirted the glen, on the left, over broken ground, frequently interrupted with brush-wood and wild plants, which she was often obliged to make a circuit to avoid.

She could not approach these woods, without experiencing keener sense of her danger. Their deep silence, except when the wind swept among their branches, and impenetrable glooms shewn partially by the sudden flash, and then, by the red glare of the torch, which served only to make "darkness visible," were circumstances, that contributed to renew all her most terrible apprehensions; she thought, too, that, at this moment, the countenances of her conductors displayed more than their usual fierceness, mingled with a kind of lurking exultation, which they seemed endeavouring to disguise. To her affrighted fancy it occurred, that they were leading her into these woods to complete the will of Montoni by her murder. The horrid suggestion called a groan from her heart, which surprised her companions, who turned round quickly towards her, and she demand-

* See the Abbey Berthelon on Electricity.

ed why they led her thither, beseeching them to continue their way along the open glen, which she represented to be less dangerous than the woods, in a thunder storm.

"No, no," said Bertrand, "we know best where the danger lies. See how the clouds open over our heads. Besides, we can glide under cover of the woods with less hazard of being seen, should any of the enemy be wandering this way. By holy St. Peter and all the rest of them, I've as stout a heart as the best, as many a poor devil could tell, if he were alive again—but what can we do against numbers?"

"What are you whining about?" said Ugo, contemptuously, "who fears numbers! Let them come, though they were as many as the Signor's castle could hold; I would shew the knaves what fighting is. For you—I would lay you quietly in a dry ditch, were you might peep out, and see me put the rogues to flight.—Who talks of fear!"

Bertrand replied, with an horrible oath, that he did not like such jesting, and a violent altercation ensued, which was, at length silenced by the thunder, whose deep volley was heard afar, rolling onward till it burst over their heads in sounds, that seemed to shake the earth to its centre. The ruffians paused, and looked upon each other. Between the boles of the trees, the blue lightning flashed and quivered along the ground, while, as Emily looked under the boughs, the mountains beyond frequently appeared to be clothed in livid flame. At this moment, perhaps, she felt less fear of the storm, than did either of her companions, for other terrors occupied her mind.

The men now rested under an enormous chestnut tree, and fixed their pikes in the ground, at some distance, on the iron points of which Emily repeatedly observed the lightning play, and then glide down them into the earth.

"I would we were well in the Signor's castle!" said Bertrand, "I know not why he should send us on this business. Hark! how it rattles above, there! I could almost find in my heart to turn priest, and pray. Ugo, hast got a rosary?"

"No," replied Ugo, "I leave it to cowards like thee to carry rosaries—I, carry a sword."

"And much good may it do thee in fighting against the storm?" said Bertrand.

Another peal, which was reverberated in tremendous echoes among the mountains, silenced them for a moment. As it rolled away, Ugo proposed going on. "We are only losing time here," said he, "for the thick boughs of the woods will shelter us as well as this chestnut tree."

They again led the mules forward, between the boles of the trees, and over pathless grass, that concealed their high knotted roots. The rising wind was now heard contending with the thunder, as it rushed furiously among the branches above, and brightened the red flame of the torch, which threw a stronger light forward among the woods, and shewed their gloomy recesses to be suitable resorts for the wolves, of which Ugo had formerly spoken.

At length, the strength of the wind seemed to drive the storm before it, for the thunder rolled away into distance, and was only faintly heard. After travelling through the woods for nearly an hour, during which, the elements seemed to have returned to repose, the travellers, gradually ascending from the glen, found themselves upon the open brow of a mountain, with a wide valley, extending in misty moonlight, at their feet, and above, the blue sky, trembling through the few thin clouds, that lingered after the storm, and were sinking slowly to the verge of the horizon.

Emily's spirits, now that she had quitted the woods, began to revive; for she considered, that, if these men had received an order to destroy her, they would probably have executed their barbarous purpose in the solitary wild, from whence they had just emerged, where the deed would have been shrouded from every human eye. Reassured by this reflection, and by the quiet demeanour of her guides, Emily, as they proceeded silently in a kind of sheep track, that wound along the skirts of the woods, which ascended on the right, could not survey the sleeping beauty of the vale, to which they were declining, without a momentary sensation of pleasure. It seemed varied with woods, pastures, and sloping grounds, and was screened to the north and the east by an amphitheatre of the Apennines, whose outline on the horizon was here broken into varied and elegant forms; to the west and the south, the landscape extended indistinctly into the lowlands of Tuscany.

"There is the sea yonder," said Bertrand, as if he had known that Emily was examining the twilight view, "yonder in the west, though we cannot see it."

Emily already perceived a change in the climate, from that of the wild and mountainous tract she had left; and, as she continued descending, the air became perfumed by the breath of a thousand nameless flowers among the grass, called forth by the late rain. So soothingly beautiful was the scene around her, and so strikingly contrasted to the gloomy grandeur of those, to

which she had long been confined, and to the manners of the people, who moved among them, that she could almost have fancied herself again at La Vallee, and, wondering why Montoni had sent her hither, could scarcely believe, that he had selected so enchanting a spot for any cruel design. It was, however, probably not the spot, but the persons, who happened to inhabit it, and to whose care he could safely commit the execution of his plans, whatever they might be, that had determined his choice.

She now ventured again to inquire, whether they were near the place of their destination, and was answered by Ugo, that they had not far to go. "Only to the wood of chestnuts in the valley yonder," said he, "there, by the brook, that sparkles with the moon; I wish I was once at rest there, with a flask of good wine, and a slice of Tuscany bacon."

Emily's spirits revived, when she heard, that the journey was so nearly concluded, and saw the wood of chestnuts in an open part of the vale, on the margin of the stream.

In a short time, they reached the entrance of the wood, and perceived, between the twinkling leaves, a light, streaming from a distant cottage window. They proceeded along the edge of the brook to where the trees, crowding over it, excluded the moonbeams, but a long line of light, from the cottage above, was seen on its dark tremulous surface. Bertrand now stepped on first, and Emily heard him knock, and call loudly at the door. As she reached it, the small upper casement, where the light appeared, was unclosed by a man, who, having inquired what they wanted, immediately descended, let them into a neat rustic cot, and called up his wife to set refreshments before the travellers. As this man conversed, rather apart, with Bertrand, Emily anxiously surveyed him. He was a tall, but not robust peasant, of a fallow complexion, and had a shrewd and cunning eye; his countenance was not of a character to win the ready confidence of youth, and there was nothing in his manner, that might conciliate a stranger.

Ugo called impatiently for supper, and in a tone as if he knew his authority here to be unquestionable. "I expected you an hour ago," said the peasant, "for I have had Signor Montoni's letter these three hours, and I and my wife had given you up, and gone to bed. How did you fare in the storm?"

"Ill enough," replied Ugo, "ill enough, and we are like to fare ill enough here too, unless you will make more haste. Get us more wine, and let us see what you have to eat."

The peasant placed before them all, that his cottage afforded ; ham, wine, figs, and grapes of such size and flavour, as Emily had seldom tasted.

After taking refreshment, she was shewn by the peasant's wife to her little bed-chamber, where she asked some questions concerning Montoni, to which the woman, whose name was Dorina, gave reserved answers, pretending ignorance of his *Excellenza's* intention in sending Emily hither, but acknowledging that her husband had been apprized of the circumstance. Perceiving, that she could obtain no intelligence concerning her destination, Emily dismissed Dorina, and retired to repose ; but all the busy scenes of the past and the anticipated ones of the future came to her anxious mind, and conspired with the sense of her new situation to banish sleep.

CHAP. XXXIII.

“ Was nought around but images of rest,
Sleep-soothing groves and quiet lawns between,
And flowery beds that slumberous influence keft,
From poppies breath'd, and banks of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled every where their waters sheen,
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.”

THOMPSON.

WHEN Emily, in the morning, opened her casement, she was surpris'd to observe the beauties, that surrounded it. The cottage was nearly-embowered in the woods, which were chiefly of chestnut, intermixed with some cypress, larch and sycamore. Beneath the dark and spreading branches, appeared, to the north, and to the east, the woody Apennines, rising in majestic amphitheatre, not black with pines, as she had been accustomed to see them, but their loftiest summits crowned with ancient forests of chestnut, oak, and oriental plane, now animated with the rich tints of autumn, and which swept downward to the valley uninterruptedly, except where some bold rocky promontory looked out from among the foliage, and caught the passing gleam. Vineyards stretched along the feet of the mountains, where the elegant villas of the Tuscan nobility frequently adorn-

ed the scene, and overlooked slopes clothed with groves of olive, mulberry, orange and lemon. The plain, to which these declined, was coloured with the riches of cultivation, whose mingled hues were mellowed into harmony by an Italian sun. Vines, their purple clustres blushing between the russet foliage, hung in luxuriant festoons from the branches of standard fig and cherry trees, while pastures of verdure, such as Emily had seldom seen in Italy, enriched the banks of a stream that, after descending from the mountains, wound along the landscape, which it reflected, to a bay of the sea. There, far in the west, the waters, fading into the sky, assumed a tint of the faintest purple, and the line of separation between them was, now and then, discernible only by the progress of a sail, brightened with the sunbeam, along the horizon.

The cottage, which was shaded by the woods from the intense rays of the sun, and was open only to his evening light, was covered entirely with vines, fig trees and jessamine, whose flowers surpassed in size and fragrance any that Emily had seen. These and ripening clusters of grapes hung round her little casement. The turf, that grew under the woods, was inlaid with a variety of wild flowers and perfumed herbs, and, on the opposite margin of the stream, whose current diffused freshness beneath the shades, rose a grove of lemon and orange trees. This, though nearly opposite to Emily's window, did not interrupt her prospect, but rather heightened, by its dark verdure, the effect of the perspective; and to her this spot was a bower of sweets, whose charms communicated imperceptibly to her mind somewhat of their own serenity.

She was soon summoned to breakfast, by the peasant's daughter, a girl about seventeen, of a pleasant countenance, which, Emily was glad to observe, seemed animated with the pure affections of nature, though the others, that surrounded her, expressed, more or less, the worst qualities—cruelty, ferocity, cunning and duplicity; of the latter style of countenance, especially, were those of the peasant and his wife. Maddelina spoke little, but what she said was in a soft voice, and with an air of modesty and complacency, that interested Emily, who breakfasted at a separate table with Dorina, while Ugo and Bertrand were taking a repast of Tuscany bacon and wine with their host, near the cottage door; when they had finished which, Ugo, rising hastily, inquired for his mule, and Emily learned that he was to return to Udolpho, while Bertrand remained at the cottage; a circumstance, which, though it did not surprise, distressed her

When Ugo was departed, Emily proposed to walk in the neighbouring woods ; but, on being told, that she must not quit the cottage, without having Bertrand for her attendant, she withdrew to her own room. There, as her eyes settled on the towering Apennines, she recollected the terrific scenery they had exhibited and the horrors she had suffered; on the preceding night, particularly at the moment when Bertrand had betrayed himself to be an assassin ; and these remembrances awakened a train of images, which, since they abstracted her from a consideration of her own situation, she pursued for sometime, and then arranged in the following lines ; pleased to have discovered any innocent means, by which she could beguile an hour of misfortune.

THE PILGRIM*.

Slow o'er the Apennine, with bleeding feet,
A patient Pilgrim wound his lonely way,
To deck the Lady of Loretto's feat
With all the little wealth his zeal could pay.
From mountain-tops cold died the evening ray,
And stretch'd in twilight, slept the vale below ;
And now the last, last purple streaks of day
Along the melancholy West fade slow.
High o'er his head, the restless pine complain,
As on their summit rolls the breeze of night ;
Beneath, the hoarse stream chides the rocks in vain :
The Pilgrim pauses on the dizzy height.
Then to the veil his cautious step he prest,
For there a hermit's cross was dimly seen,
Cresting the rock, and there his limbs might rest,
Cheer'd in the good man's cave, by faggot's sheen,
On easy beds, nor guile his sleep molest.
Unhappy Luke ! he trusts a treacherous clue !
Behind the cliff the lurking robber stood ;
No friendly moon his giant shadow threw
Athwart the road to save the Pilgrim's blood ;
On as he went a vesper-hymn he sang,
The hymn, that nightly sooth'd him to repose,
Pierce on his harmless prey the ruffian sprang !
The Pilgrim bleeds to death, his eye-lids close.
Yet his meek spirit knew no vengeful care,
But, dying, for his murd'rer breath'd—a faintest pray'r !

Preferring the solitude of her room to the company of the persons below stairs, Emily dined above, and Maddelina was suffered to attend her, from whose simple conversation she learn-

* This poem and that entitled *The Traveller*, in vol. ii. have already appeared in a periodical publication.

ed, that the peasant and his wife were old inhabitants of this cottage, which had been purchased for them by Montoni, in reward of some service, rendered him, many years before, by Marco, to whom Carlo, the steward at the castle, was nearly related. "So many years ago, Signora," added Maddelina, "that I know nothing about it; but my father did the Signor a great good, for my mother has often said to him, this cottage was the least he ought to have had."

To the mention of this circumstance Emily listened with a painful interest, since it appeared to give a frightful colour to the character of Marco, whose service, thus rewarded by Montoni, she could scarcely doubt had been criminal; and, if so, had too much reason to believe, that she had been committed into his hands for some desperate purpose. "Did you ever hear how many years it is," said Emily, who was considering of Signora Laurentini's disappearance from Udolpho, "since your father performed the services you spoke of?"

"It was a little before he came to live at the cottage, Signora," replied Maddelina, "and that is about eighteen years ago."

This was near the period, when Signora Laurentini had been said to disappear, and it occurred to Emily, that Marco had assisted in that mysterious affair, and, perhaps, had been employed in a murder! This horrible suggestion fixed her in such profound reverie, that Maddelina quitted the room, unperceived by her, and she remained unconscious of all around her, for a considerable time. Tears, at length, came to her relief, after indulging which, her spirits becoming calmer, she ceased to tremble at a view of evils, that might never arrive; and had sufficient resolution to endeavour to withdraw her thoughts from the contemplation of her own interests. Remembering the few books, which even in the hurry of her departure from Udolpho she had put into her little package, she sat down with one of them at her pleasant casement, whence her eyes often wandered from the page to the landscape whose beauty gradually soothed her mind into gentle melancholy.

Here, she remained alone, till evening, and saw the sun descend the western sky, throw all his pomp of light and shadow upon the mountains, and gleam upon the distant ocean and the stealing sails, as he sunk amidst the waves. Then, at the musing hour of twilight, her softened thoughts returned to Valancourt; she again recollected every circumstance, connected with the midnight music, and all that might assist her conjecture, concerning his imprisonment at the castle, and, becoming confirmed

in the supposition, that it was his voice she had heard there, she looked back to that gloomy abode with emotions of grief and momentary regret.

Refreshed by the cool and fragrant air, and her spirits soothed to a state of gentle melancholy by the stillly murmur of the brook below and of the woods around, she lingered at her casement long after the sun had set, watching the valley sinking into obscurity, till only the grand outline of the surrounding mountain shadowed upon the horizon, remained visible. But a clear moonlight, that succeeded, gave to the landscape, what time gives to the scenes of past life, when it softens all their harsher features, and throws over the whole the mellowing shade of distant contemplation. The scenes of La Vallee, in the early morn of her life, when she was protected and beloved by parents equally loved, appeared in Emily's memory tenderly beautiful, like the prospect before her, and awakened mournful comparisons. Unwilling to encounter the coarse behaviour of the peasant's wife, she remained supperless in her room, while she wept again over her forlorn and perilous situation, a review of which entirely overcame the small remains of her fortitude, and, reducing her to temporary dependence, she wished to be released from this heavy load of life, that had so long oppressed her, and prayed to Heaven to take her, in its mercy to her parents.

Wearied with weeping, she, at length, lay down on her mattress, and sunk to sleep, but was soon awakened by a knocking at her chamber door, and starting up in terror, she heard a voice calling her. The image of Bertrand, with a stiletto in his hand appeared to her alarmed fancy, and she neither opened the door, or answered, but listened in profound silence, till the voice repeating her name in the same low tone, she demanded who called. "It is I Signora," replied the voice, which she now distinguished to be Maddelina's, "pray open the door. Don't be frightened, it is I."

"And what brings you here so late, Maddelina?" said Emily, as she let her in. "Hush! Signora, for heaven's sake hush, if we are overheard I shall never be forgiven. My father and mother and Bertrand are all gone to bed," continued Maddelina, as she gently shut the door, and crept forward, "and I have brought you some supper, for you had none, you know, Signora, below stairs. Here are some grapes and figs and half a cup of wine." Emily thanked her, but expressed apprehension lest this kindness should draw upon her the resentment of Dorina, when she perceived the fruit was gone. "Take it back, there-

fore, Maddelina," added Emily, "I shall suffer much less from the want of it, than I should do, if this act of good nature was to subject you to your mother's displeasure."

"O Signora! there is no danger of that," replied Maddelina, "my mother cannot miss the fruit, for I saved it from my own supper. You will make me very unhappy, if you refuse to take it, Signora." Emily was so much affected by this instance of the good girl's generosity, that she remained for sometime unable to reply, and Maddelina, watched her in silence, till, mistaken the cause of her emotion, she said, "Do not weep so Signora! My mother, to be sure, is a little cross, sometimes, but then it is soon over,—so don't take it so much to heart. She often scolds me, too, but then I have learned to bear it, and, when she has done, if I can but steal out into the woods and play upon my fliccado, I forget it all directly."

Emily, smiling through her tears, told Maddelina, that she was a good girl, and then accepted her offering. She wished anxiously to know, whether Bertrand and Dorina had spoken of Montoni, or of his designs, concerning herself, in the presence of Maddelina, but disdained to tempt the innocent girl to a conduct so mean, as that of betraying the private conversation of her parents. When she was departing, Emily requested, that she would come to her room as often as she dared, without offending her mother, and Maddelina, after promising, that she would do so, stole softly back again to her own chamber.

Thus several days passed, during which Emily remained in her own room, Maddelina attending her only at her repast, whose gentle countenance and manners soothed her more than any circumstance she had known for many months. Of her pleasant embowered chamber she now became fond, and began to experience in it those feelings of security, which we naturally attach to home. In this interval also, her mind, having been undisturbed by any new circumstance of disgust, or alarm, recovered its tone sufficiently to permit her the enjoyment of her books, among which she found some unfinished sketches of landscapes, several blank sheets of paper, with her drawing instruments, and she was thus enabled to amuse herself with selecting some of the lovely features of the prospect, that her window commanded, and combining them in scenes, to which her tasteful fancy gave a last grace. In these little sketches she generally placed interesting groups, characteristic of the scenery they animated, and often contrived to tell, with perspicuity, some simple and affecting story, when as a tear fell over the pictured griefs, which her

imagination drew, she would forget, for a moment, her real sufferings. Thus innocently she beguiled the heavy hours of misfortune, and, with meek patience, awaited the events of futurity.

A beautiful evening that had succeeded to a sultry day, at length induced Emily to walk, though she knew that Bertrand must attend her, and, with Maddelina for her companion, she left the cottage, followed by Bertrand, who allowed her to choose her own way. The hour was cool and silent, and she could not look upon the country around her, without delight. How lovely, too, appeared the brilliant blue, that coloured all the upper region of the air, and, thence fading downward, was lost in the saffron glow of the horizon! Nor less so were the varied shades and warm colouring of the Apennines, as the evening sun threw his slanting rays athwart their broken surface. Emily followed the course of the stream, under the shades, that overhung its grassy margin. On the opposite banks, the pastures were animated with herds of cattle of a beautiful cream colour; and, beyond, were groves of lemon and orange, with fruit glowing on the branches, frequent almost as the leaves, which partly concealed it. She pursued her way towards the sea, which reflected the warm glow of sunset, while the cliffs, that rose over its edge, were tinted with the last rays. The valley was terminated on the right by a lofty promontory, whose summit, impending over the waves, was crowned with a ruined tower, now serving for the purpose of a beacon, whose shattered battlements and the extended wing of some sea fowl, that circled near it, were still illumined by the upward beams of the sun, though his disk was now sunk beneath the horizon; while the lower part of the ruin, the cliff on which it stood and the waves at its foot, were shaded with the first tints of twilight.

Having reached this headland, Emily gazed with solemn pleasure on the cliffs, that extended on either hand along the sequestered shores, some crowned with groves of pine, and others exhibiting only barren precipices of a grayish marble, except where the crags were tufted with myrtle and other aromatic shrubs. The sea slept in a perfect calm; its waves, dying in murmurs on the shores, flowed with the gentlest undulation, while its clear surface reflected in softened beauty the vermeil tints of the west. Emily, as she looked upon the ocean, thought of France and of past times, and she wished, Oh! how ardently, and vainly—wished! that its waves would bear her to her distant, native home!

"Ah! that vessel," said she, "that vessel, which glides along so stately, with its tall sails reflected in the water, is, perhaps, bound for France! Happy—happy bark!" She continued to gaze upon it, with warm emotion, till the gray of twilight obscured the distance, and veiled it from her view. The melancholy sound of the waves at her feet assisted the tenderness, that occasioned her tears, and this was the only sound, that broke upon the hour, till, having followed the windings of the beach, for sometime, a chorus of voices passed her on the air. She paused a moment, wishing to hear more, yet fearing to be seen, and, for the first time, looked back to Bertrand, as her protector, who was following, at a short distance, in company with some other person. Reassured by this circumstance, she advanced towards the sounds, which seemed to arise from behind a high promontory, that projected athwart the beach. There was now a sudden pause in the music, and then one female voice was heard to sing in a kind of chant. Emily quickened her steps, and, winding round the rock, saw, within the sweeping bay, beyond, which was hung with woods from the borders of the beach to the very summit of the cliffs, two groups of peasants, one seated beneath the shades, and the other standing on the edge of the sea, round the girl, who was singing, and who held in her hand a chaplet of flowers, which she seemed about to drop into the waves.

Emily, listening with surprise and attention, distinguished the following invocation delivered in the pure and elegant tongue of Tuscany and accompanied by a few pastoral instruments.

TO A SEA-NYMPH.

O nymph! who loves to float on the green wave,
When Neptune sleeps beneath the moonlight hour,
Lull'd by thy music's melancholy pow'r,
O nymph, arise from out thy pearly cave!

For Hesper beams amid the twilight shade,
And soon shall Cynthia tremble o'er the tide,
Gleam on these cliffs, that bound the ocean's pride,
And lonely silence all the air pervade.

Then, let thy tender voice at distance swell,
And steal along this solitary shore,
Sink on the breeze, till dying—heard no more—
Thou wak'st the sudden magic of thy shell.

While the long coast in echo sweet replies,
Thy soothing strains the pensive heart beguile,
And bid the visions of the future smile,

O nymph from out thy pearly cave arise!

(Chorus—*Arise!*)

(Semi-chorus)—*Arise!*

The last words being repeated by the surrounding group, the garland of flowers was thrown into the waves, and the chorus, sinking gradually into a chant, died away in silence.

"What can this mean, Maddelina!" said Emily, awakening from the pleasing trance, into which the music had lulled her. "This is the eve of a festival, Signora," replied Maddelina; "and the peasants then amuse themselves with all kinds of sports."

"But they talked of a sea-nymph," said Emily: "how came these good people to think of a sea-nymph?"

"O, Signora," rejoined Maddelina, mistaking the reason of Emily's surprise, "nobody *believes* in such things, but our old songs tell of them, and, when we are at our sports, we sometimes sing to them and throw garlands into the sea."

Emily had been early taught to venerate Florence as the seat of literature and of the fine arts; but, that its taste for classic story should descend to the peasants of the country, occasioned her both surprise and admiration. The Arcadian air of the girls next attracted her attention. Their dress was a very short full petticoat of light green, with a boddice of white silk; the sleeves loose, and tied up at the shoulders with ribbons and bunches of flowers. Their hair, falling in ringlets on their necks, was also ornamented with flowers, and with a small straw hat, which, set rather backward and on one side of the head, gave an expression of gaiety and smartness to the whole figure. When the song had concluded, several of these girls approached Emily, and, inviting her to sit down among them, offered her, and Maddelina, whom they knew, grapes and figs.

Emily accepted their courtesy, much pleased with the gentleness and grace of their manners, which appeared to be perfectly natural to them: and when Bertrand, soon after, approached, and was hastily drawing her away, a peasant, holding up a flask, invited him to drink; a temptation, which Bertrand was seldom very valiant in resisting.

"Let the young lady join in the dance, my friend," said the peasant, "while we empty this flask. They are going to begin directly. Strike up! my lads, strike up your tambourines and merry flutes!"

They sounded gaily; and the younger peasants formed themselves into a circle, which Emily would readily have joined, had her spirits been in unison with their mirth. Maddelina, however, tripped it lightly, and Emily, as she looked on the happy group, lost the sense of her misfortunes in that of a benevolent

pleasure. But the pensive melancholy of her mind returned, as she sat rather apart from the company, listening to the mellow music, which the breeze softened as it bore it away, and watching the moon, stealing its tremulous light over the waves and on the woody summits of the cliffs, that wound along these Tuscan shores.

Meanwhile, Bertrand was so well pleased with his first flask, that he very willingly commenced the attack of a second, and it was late before Emily, not without some apprehension, returned to the cottage.

After this evening, she frequently walked with Maddelina, but was never unattended by Bertrand; and her mind became by degrees as tranquil as the circumstances of her situation would permit. The quiet, in which she was suffered to live, encouraged her to hope, that she was not sent hither with an evil design; and, had it not appeared probable, that Valancourt was at this time an inhabitant of Udolpho, she would have wished to remain at the cottage, till an opportunity should offer of returning to her native country. But, concerning Montoni's motive for sending her into Tuscany, she was more than ever perplexed, nor could she believe that any consideration for her safety had influenced him on this occasion.

She had been sometime at the cottage, before she recollected that, in the hurry of leaving Udolpho, she had forgotten the papers committed to her by her late aunt, relative to the Languedoc estates; but, though this remembrance occasioned her much uneasiness, she had some hope, that in the obscure place, where they were deposited, they would escape the detection of Montoni.

C H A P. XXXIV.

"My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.
I play the torturer, by small and small,
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken."

RICHARD II.

WE now return for a moment, to Venice, where Count Morano was suffering under an accumulation of misfortunes. Soon after his arrival in that city, he had been arrested by order of the senate, and, without knowing of what he was suspected, was conveyed to a place of confinement, whither the most stren-

uous inquiries of his friends had been unable to trace him. Who the enemy was, that had occasioned him this calamity, he had not been able to guess, unless, indeed, it was Montoni, on whom his suspicion rested, and not only with much apparent probability, but with justice.

In the affair of the poisoned cup, Montoni had suspected Morano ; but, being unable to obtain the degree of proof, which was necessary to convict him of a guilty intention, he had recourse to means of other revenge, than he could hope to obtain by prosecution. He employed a person, in whom he believed he might confide, to drop a letter of accusation into the *Dennunzie segrete*, or lions' mouths, which are fixed in a gallery of the Doge's palace, as receptacles for anonymous information, concerning persons, who may be disaffected towards the state. As, on these occasions, the accuser is not confronted with the accused, a man may safely impeach his enemy, and accomplish an unjust revenge, without fear of punishment, or detection. That Montoni should have recourse to these diabolical means of ruining a person whom he suspected of having attempted his life, is not in the least surprising. In the letter, which he had employed as the instrument of his revenge, he accused Morano of designs against the state, which he attempted to prove with all the plausible simplicity of which he was master ; and the senate, with whom a suspicion was, at that time, almost equal to a proof, arrested the Count, in consequence of this accusation ; and, without even hinting to him his crime, threw him into one of those secret prisons, which were the terror of the Venetians, and in which persons often languished, and sometimes died, without being discovered by their friends.

Morano had incurred the personal resentment of many members of the state ; his habits of life had rendered him obnoxious to some ; and his ambition, and the bold rivalry, which he discovered, on several public occasions,—to others ; and it was not to be expected, that mercy would soften the rigour of a law, which was to be dispensed from the hands of his enemies.

Montoni, meantime, was beset by dangers of another kind. His castle was besieged by troops, who seemed willing to dare every thing, and to suffer patiently any hardships in pursuit of victory. The strength of the fortress, however, withstood their attack, and this, with the vigorous defence of the garrison and the scarcity of provision on these wild mountains, soon compelled the assailants to raise the siege.

When Udolpho was once more left to the quiet possession of Montoni, he dispatched Ugo into Tuscany for Emily, whom he

had sent from considerations of her personal safety, to a place of greater security, than a castle, which was, at that time, liable to be overrun by his enemies. Tranquillity being once more restored to Udolpho, he was impatient to secure her again under his roof, and had commissioned Ugo to assist Bertrand in guarding her back to the castle. Thus compelled to return, Emily bade the kind Maddelina farewell, with regret, and, after about a fortnight's stay in Tuscany, where she had experienced an interval of quiet, which was absolutely necessary to sustain her long harassed spirits, began once more to ascend the Apennines, from whose heights she gave a long and sorrowful look to the beautiful country, that extended at their feet, and to the distant Mediterranean, whose waves she had so often wished would bear her back to France. The distress she felt, on her return towards the place of her former sufferings, was, however, softened by a conjecture, that Valancourt was there, and she found some degree of comfort in the thought of being near him, notwithstanding the consideration, that he was probably a prisoner.

It was noon, when she had left the cottage, and the evening was closed long before she came within the neighbourhood of Udolpho: There was a moon, but it shone only at intervals, for the night was cloudy, and lighted by the torch, which Ugo carried, the travellers paced silently along. Emily musing on her situation, and Bertrand and Ugo anticipating the comforts of a flask of wine and a good fire, for they had perceived for some time the difference between the warm climate of the lowlands of Tuscany and the nipping air of these upper regions. Emily was, at length, roused from her reverie by the far off sound of the castle clock, to which she listened not without some degree of awe, as it rolled away on the breeze. Another and another note succeeded, and died in fullen murmur among the mountains:—to her mournful imagination it seemed a knell measuring out some fatal period for her.

"Aye, there is the old clock," said Bertrand, "there he is still; the cannon have not silenced him!"

"No," answered Ugo, "he crowed as loud as the best of them in the midst of it all. There he was roaring out in the hottest fire I have seen this many a day! I said that some of them would have a hit at the old fellow, but he escaped, and the tower too."

The road winding round the base of a mountain, they now came within view of the castle, which was shewn in the perspective of the valley by a gleam of moonshine, and then vanish-

ed in shade ; while even a transient view of it had awakened the poignancy of Emily's feelings. Its massy and gloomy walls gave her terrible ideas of imprisonment and suffering : yet, as she advanced, some degree of hope mingled with her terror ; for, though this was certainly the residence of Montoni, it was possibly, also, that of Valancourt, and she could not approach a place, where he might be, without experiencing somewhat of the joy of hope.

They continued to wind along the valley, and, soon after, she saw again the old walls and moonlight towers, rising over the woods : the strong rays enabled her, also, to perceive the ravages, which the siege had made,—with the broken walls, and shattered battlements, for they were now at the foot of the steep, on which Udolpho stood. Massy fragments had rolled down among the woods, through which the travellers now began to ascend, and there mingled with the loose earth, and pieces of rock they had brought with them. The woods, too, had suffered much from the batteries above, for here the enemy had endeavoured to screen themselves from the fire of the ramparts. Many noble trees were levelled with the ground, and others to a wide extent, were entirely stripped of their upper branches. “ We had better dismount,” said Ugo, “ and lead the mules up the hill, or we shall get into some of the holes, which the balls have left. Here are plenty of them. Give me the torch,” continued Ugo, after they had dismounted, “ and take care you don't stumble over any thing, that lies in your way, for the ground is not yet cleared of the enemy.”

“ How !” exclaimed Emily, “ are any of the enemy here, then ?”

“ Nay, I don't know for that, now,” he replied, “ but when I came away I saw one or two of them lying under the trees.”

As they proceeded, the torch threw a gloomy light upon the ground, and far among the recesses of the woods, and Emily feared to look forward, lest some object of horror should meet her eye. The path was often strewn with broken heads of arrows, and with shattered remains of armour, such as at that period was mingled with the lighter dress of the soldiers. “ Bring the light hither,” said Bertrand, “ I have stumbled over something, that rattles loud enough.” Ugo holding up the torch, they perceived a steel breastplate on the ground, which Bertrand raised, and they saw, that it was pierced through, and that the lining was entirely covered with blood ; but upon Emily's earnest entreaties, that they would proceed, Bertrand, uttering some joke upon the unfortunate person, to whom it had belonged, threw it hard upon the ground, and they passed on.

At every step she took, Emily feared to see some vestige of death. Coming soon after to an opening in the woods, Bertrand stopped to survey the ground, which was encumbered with massy trunks and branches of the trees, that had so lately adorned it, and seemed to have been a spot particularly fatal to the besiegers; for it was evident from the destruction of the trees, that here the hottest fire of the garrison had been directed. As Ugo held again forth the torch, steel glittered between the fallen trees; the ground beneath was covered with broken arms, and with the torn vestments of soldiers, whose mangled forms Emily almost expected to see; and she again entreated her companions to proceed, who were, however, too intent in their examination, to regard her, and she turned her eyes from this desolated scene to the castle above, where she observed lights gliding along the ramparts. Presently, the castle clock struck twelve, and then a trumpet sounded, of which Emily inquired the occasion.

"O! they are only changing watch," replied Ugo. "I do not remember this trumpet," said Emily, "it is a new custom." "It is only an old one revived, lady; we always use it in time of war. We have sounded it, at midnight, ever since the place was besieged."

"Hark!" said Emily, as the trumpet sounded again; and, in the next moment, she heard a faint clash of arms, and then the watchword passed along the terrace above, and was answered from a distant part of the castle; after which all was again still. She complained of cold, and begged to go on. "Presently, lady," said Bertrand, turning over some broken arms with the pike he usually carried. "What have we here?"

"Hark!" cried Emily, "what noise was that?"

"What noise was it?" said Ugo, starting up and listening.

"Hush!" repeated Emily. "It surely came from the ramparts above:" and, on looking up, they perceived a light moving along the walls, while, in the next instant, the breeze swelling, the voice sounded louder than before.

"Who goes yonder?" cried a sentinel of the castle. "Speak, or it will be worse for you." Bertrand uttered a shout of joy. "Ah! my brave comrade, is it you?" said he, and he blew a shrill whistle, which signal was answered by another from the soldier on watch; and the party, then passing forward, soon after emerged from the woods upon the broken road, that led immediately to the castle gates, and Emily saw, with renewed terror, the whole of that stupendous structure. "Alas!" said she to herself, "I am going again into my prison!"

"Here has been warm work, by St. Marco!" cried Bertrand, waving the torch over the ground; "the balls have torn up the earth here, with a vengeance."

"Aye," replied Ugo, "they were fired from that redoubt, yonder, and rare execution they did. The enemy made a furious attack upon the great gates; but they might have guessed they could never carry it there; for, besides the cannon from the walls, our archers, on the two round towers, showered down upon them at such a rate, that, by holy Peter! there was no standing it. I never saw a better fight in my life; I laughed, till my sides ached, to see how the knaves scampered. Bertrand, my good fellow, thou shouldst have been among them; I warrant thou wouldst have won the race!"

"Hah! you are at your old tricks again," said Bertrand in a surly tone. "It is well for thee thou art so near the castle; thou knowest I have killed my man before now." Ugo replied only by a laugh, and then gave some further account of the siege, to which as Emily listened, she was struck by the strong contrast of the present scene with that which had so lately been acted here.

The mingled uproar of cannon, drums, and trumpets, the groans of the conquered, and the shouts of the conquerors were now sunk into a silence so profound, that it seemed as if death had triumphed alike over the vanquished and the victor. The shattered condition of one of the towers of the great gates by no means confirmed the *valiant* account just given by Ugo of the scampering party, who, it was evident, had not only made a stand, but had done much mischief before they took to flight; for this tower appeared, as far as Emily could judge by the dim moonlight that fell upon it, to be laid open, and the battlements were nearly demolished.

While she gazed, a light glimmered through one of the lower loopholes, and disappeared; but, in the next moment, she perceived through the broken wall, a soldier, with a lamp, ascending the narrow staircase, that wound within the tower, and, remembering that it was the same she had passed up, on the night when Barnardine had deluded her with a promise of seeing Madame Montoni, fancy gave her somewhat of the terror she had then suffered. She was now very near the gates, over which the soldier having opened the door of the portal chamber, the lamp he carried gave her a dusky view of that terrible apartment, and she almost sunk under the recollected horrors of the moment, when she had drawn aside the curtain, and discovered the object it was meant to conceal.

"Perhaps," said she to herself, "it is now used for a similar purpose; perhaps, that soldier goes, at this dead hour, to watch over the corpse of his friend!" The little remains of her fortitude now gave way to the united force of remembered and anticipated horrors, for the melancholy fate of Madame Montoni appeared to foretell her own. She considered, that, though the Languedoc estates, if she relinquished them, would satisfy Montoni's avarice, they might not appease his vengeance, which was seldom pacified but by a terrible sacrifice; and she even thought, that, were she to resign them, the fear of justice might urge him either to detain her a prisoner or to take away her life.

They were now arrived at the gates, where Bertrand, observing the light glimmer through a small casement of the portal chamber, called aloud, and the soldier looking out, demanded who was there. "Here, I have brought you a prisoner," said Ugo, "open the gate and let us in."

"Tell me first, who it is that demands entrance," replied the soldier. "What! my old comrade," cried Ugo, "don't you know me? not know Ugo? I have brought home a prisoner here, bound hand and foot—a fellow, who has been drinking Tuscany wine, while we here have been fighting."

"You will not rest till you meet with your match," said Bertrand sullenly. "Hah! my comrade, is it you?" said the soldier—"I'll be with you directly."

Emily presently heard his steps descending the stairs within, and then the heavy chain fall, and the bolts undraw of a small postern door, which he opened to admit the party. He held the lamp low, to shew the step of the gate, and she found herself once more beneath the gloomy arch, and heard the door close, that seemed to shut her from the world for ever. In the next moment, she was in the first court of the castle, where she surveyed the spacious and solitary area, with a kind of calm despair: while the dead hour of the night, the gothic gloom of the surrounding buildings, and the hollow and imperfect echoes, which they returned, as Ugo and the soldier conversed together, assisted to increase the melancholy forebodings of her heart. Passing on to the second court, a distant sound broke feebly on the silence, and gradually swelling louder, as they advanced, Emily distinguished voices of revelry and laughter, but they were to her far other than sounds of joy. "Why, you have got some Tuscany wine among you, *here*," said Bertrand, "if one may judge by the uproar that is going forward. Ugo has taken a larger share of that than of fighting, I'll be sworn. Who is carousing at this late hour?"

"His *Excellenza* and the Signors," replied the soldier: it is a sign you are a stranger at the castle, or you would not need to ask the question. They are brave spirits, that do without sleep—they generally pass the night in good cheer; would that we, who keep the watch, had a little of it! It is cold work, pacing the ramparts so many hours of the night, if one has no good liquor to warm one's heart."

"Courage, my lad, courage ought to warm your heart," said Ugo. "Courage!" replied the soldier sharply, with a menacing air, which Ugo perceiving, prevented his saying more, by returning to the subject of the carousal. "This is a new custom," said he; "when I left the castle, the Signors used to sit up counselling."

"Aye, and for that matter, carousing too," replied Ugo, "but, since the siege, they have done nothing but make merry; and if I was they, I would settle accounts with myself, for all my hard fighting, the same way."

They had now crossed the second court, and reached the hall door, when the soldier, bidding them good night, hastened back to his post; and, while they waited for admittance, Emily considered how she might avoid seeing Montoni, and retire unnoticed to her former apartment, for she shrunk from the thought of encountering either him or any of his party, at this hour. The uproar within the castle was now so loud, that, though Ugo knocked repeatedly at the hall door, he was not heard by any of the servants, a circumstance, which increased Emily's alarm, while it allowed her time to deliberate on the means of retiring unobserved; for, though she might, perhaps, pass up the great staircase unseen, it was impossible she could find the way to her chamber, without a light, the difficulty of procuring which, and the danger of wandering about the castle, without one, immediately struck her. Bertrand had only a torch, and she knew, that the servants never brought a taper to the door, for the hall was sufficiently lighted by the large tripod lamp, which hung in the vaulted roof; and, while she should wait till Annette could bring a taper, Montoni, or some of his companions, might discover her.

The door was now opened by Carlo; and Emily, having requested him to send Annette immediately with a light to the great gallery, where she determined to await her, passed on with hasty steps towards the staircase; while Bertrand and Ugo, with the torch, followed old Carlo to the servants' hall, impatient for supper and the warm blaze of a wood fire. Emily, lighted only

by the feeble rays, which the lamp above threw between the arches of this extensive hall, endeavoured to find her way to the staircase, now hid in obscurity ; while the shouts of merriment, that burst from a remote apartment, served, by heightening her terror, to increase her perplexity, and she expected, every instant, to see the door of that room open, and Montoni and his companions issue forth. Having, at length, reached the staircase, and found her way to the top, she seated herself on the last stair, to await the arrival of Annette ; for the profound darkness of the gallery deterred her from proceeding farther, and, while she listened for her footstep, she heard only distant sounds of revelry, which rose in sullen echoes from among the arcades below. Once she thought she heard a low sound from the dark gallery behind her ; and, turning her eyes, fancied she saw something luminous move in it ; and, since she could not, at this moment, subdue the weakness that caused her fears, she quitted her seat, and crept softly down a few stairs lower.

Annette not yet appearing, Emily now concluded, that she was gone to bed, and that nobody chose to call her up ; and the prospect, that presented itself, of passing the night in darkness, in this place, or in some other equally forlorn (for she knew it would be impracticable to find her way through the intricacies of the galleries to her chamber) drew tears of mingled terror and despondency from her eyes.

While thus she sat, she fancied she heard again an odd sound from the gallery, and she listened, scarcely daring to breathe, but the increasing voices below overcame every other sound. Soon after, she heard Montoni and his companions burst into the hall, who spoke, as if they were much intoxicated, and seemed to be advancing towards the staircase. She now remembered, that they must come this way to their chambers, and, forgetting all the terrors of the gallery, hurried towards it with an intention of secreting herself in some of the passages, that opened beyond, and of endeavouring, when the Signors were retired, to find her way to her own room, or to that of Annette, which was in a remote part of the castle.

With extended arms, she crept along the gallery, still hearing the voices of persons below, who seemed to stop in conversation at the foot of the staircase, and then pausing for a moment to listen, half fearful of going further into the darkness of the gallery, where she still imagined, from the noise she had heard, that some person was lurking, " They are already informed of my arrival," said she, " and Montoni is coming himself to seek me !

In the present state of his mind, his purpose must be desperate." Then, recollecting the scene, that had passed in the corridor, on the night preceding her departure from the castle, "O Valancourt!" said she, "I must then resign you for ever. To brave any longer the injustice of Montoni, would not be fortitude, but rashness." Still the voices below did not draw nearer, but they became louder, and she distinguished those of Verezzi and Bertolini above the rest, while the few words she caught made her listen more anxiously for others. The conversation seemed to concern herself; and, having ventured to step a few paces nearer to the staircase, she discovered, that they were disputing about her, each seeming to claim some former promise of Montoni, who appeared, at first, inclined to appease and to persuade them to return to their wine, but afterwards to be weary of the dispute, and, saying that he left them to settle it as they could, was returning with the rest of the party to the apartment he had just quitted. Verezzi then stopped him. "Where is she? Signor," said he, in a voice of impatience: "tell us where she is." "I have already told you that I do not know," replied Montoni, who seemed to be somewhat overcome with wine; "but she is most probably gone to her apartment." Verezzi and Bertolini now desisted from their inquiries, and sprang to the staircase together, while Emily, who, during this discourse, had trembled so excessively, that she had with difficulty supported herself, seemed inspired with new strength, the moment she heard the bound of their steps and ran along the gallery, dark as it was, with the fleetness of a fawn. But, long before she reached its extremity, the light, which Verezzi carried, flashed upon the walls; both appeared, and, instantly perceiving Emily, pursued her. At this moment, Bertolini, whose steps though swift, were not steady, and whose impatience overcame what little caution he had hitherto used, stumbled, and fell at his length. The lamp fell with him, and was presently expiring on the floor; but Verezzi, regardless of saving it, seized the advantage this accident gave him over his rival, and followed Emily, to whom, however, the light had shone one of the passages that branched from the gallery, and she instantly turned into it. Verezzi could just discern the way, she had taken, and this he pursued; but the sound of her steps soon sunk in distance, while he, less acquainted with the passage, was obliged to proceed through the dark, with caution, lest he should fall down a flight of steps, such as in this extensive old castle frequently terminated an avenue. This passage at length brought Emily to the corridor, into which her own

chamber opened, and, not hearing any footstep, she paused to take breath, and consider what was the safest design to be adopted. She had followed this passage, merely because it was the first that appeared, and now that she had reached the end of it, was as perplexed as before. Whither to go, or how further to find her way in the dark, she knew not; she was aware only that she must not seek her apartment, for there she would certainly be fought, and her danger increased every instant, while she remained near it. Her spirits and her breath, however, were so much exhausted, that she was compelled to rest, for a few minutes, at the end of the passage, and still she heard no steps approaching. As thus she stood, light glimmered under an opposite door of the gallery, and, from its situation, she knew, that it was the door of that mysterious chamber, where she had made a discovery so shocking, that she never remembered it but with the utmost horror. That there should be light in this chamber, and at this hour, excited her strong surprise, and she felt a momentary terror concerning it, which did not permit her to look again, for her spirits were now in such a state of weakness, that she almost expected to see the door slowly open, and some horrible object appear at it. Still she listened for a step along the passage, and looked up it, where not a ray of light appearing, she concluded, that Verezzi had gone back for the lamp; and, believing that he would shortly be there, she again considered which way she should go, or rather which way she could find in the dark.

A faint ray still glimmered under the opposite door, but so great, and, perhaps, so just was her horror of that chamber, that she would not again have tempted its secrets, though she had been certain of obtaining the light so important to her safety. She was still breathing with difficulty, and resting at the end of the passage, when she heard a rustling sound, and then a low voice, so very near her, that it seemed close to her ear; but she had presence of mind to check her emotions, and to remain quite still; in the next moment, she perceived it to be the voice of Verezzi, who did not appear to know, that she was there, but to have spoken to himself. "The air is fresher here," said he: "this should be the corridor." Perhaps, he was one of those heroes, whose courage can defy an enemy better than darkness, and he tried to rally his spirits with the sound of his own voice. However this might be, he turned to the right, and proceeded, with the same stealing steps, towards Emily's apartment, apparently forgetting, that, in darkness, she could easily elude his

search, even in her chamber ; and, like an intoxicated person, he followed pertinaciously the one idea, that had possessed his imagination.

The moment she heard his steps steal away, she left her station and moved softly to the other end of the corridor, determined to trust again to chance, and to quit it by the first avenue she could find ; but, before she could effect this, light broke upon the walls of the gallery, and, looking back, she saw Verezzi crossing it towards her chamber. She now glided into a passage, that opened on the left, without, as she thought, being perceived ; but in the next instant, another light, glimmering at the further end of this passage, threw her into new terror. While she stopped and hesitated which way to go, the pause allowed her to perceive, that it was Annette who advanced, and she hurried to meet her : but her imprudence again alarmed Emily, on perceiving whom, she burst into a scream of joy, and it was some minutes, before she could be prevailed with to be silent, or to release her mistress from the ardent clasp, in which she held her. When, at length, Emily made Annette comprehend her danger, they hurried towards Annette's room, which was in a distant part of the castle. No apprehensions, however, could yet silence the latter. " Oh dear ma'amfelle," said she, as they passed along, " what a terrified time have I had of it ! Oh ! I thought I should have died an hundred times ! I never thought I should live to see you again ! and I never was so glad to see any body in my whole life, as I am to see you now." " Hark !" cried Emily, " we are pursued ; that was the echo of steps !" " No, ma'amfelle," said Annette, " it was only the echo of a door shutting ; sound runs along these vaulted passages so, that one is continually deceived by it ; if one does but speak, or cough, it makes a noise as loud as a cannon." " Then there is the greater necessity for us to be silent," said Emily : " pr'ythee say no more, till we reach your chamber." Here, at length, they arrived, without interruption, and Annette having fastened the door, Emily sat down on her little bed, to recover breath and composure. To her inquiry, whether Valancourt was among the prisoners in the castle, Annette replied, that she had not been able to hear, but that she knew there were several persons confined. She then proceeded, in her tedious way, to give an account of the siege, or rather a detail of her terrors and various sufferings, during the attack. " But," added she, " when I heard the shouts of victory from the ramparts, I thought we were all taken, and gave myself up for lost, instead of which, we had

driven the enemy away. I went then to the north gallery, and saw a great many of them scampering away among the mountains ; but the rampart walls were all in ruins, as one may say, and there was a dismal sight to see down among the woods below, where the poor fellows were lying in heaps, but were carried off presently by their comrades. While the siege was going on, the Signor was here, and there, and every where, at the same time, as Ludovico told me, for he would not let me see any thing hardly, and locked me up, as he has often done before, in a room in the middle of the castle, and used to bring me food, and come and talk with me as often as he could ; and I must say, if it had not been for Ludovico, I should have died outright."

"Well, Annette," said Emily, "and how have affairs gone on, since the siege?"

"O! sad hurly burly doings, ma'amfelle," replied Annette ; "the Signors have done nothing but sit and drink and game, ever since. They sit up, all night, and play among themselves, for all those riches and fine things, they brought in, sometime since, when they used to go out a robbing, or as good, for days together ; and then they have dreadful quarrels about, who loses, and who wins. That fierce Signor Verezzi is always losing, as they tell me, and Signor Orsino wins from him, and this makes him very wroth, and they have had several hard set-to's about it. Then, all those fine ladies are at the castle still ; and I declare I am frightened, whenever I meet any of them in the passages."

"Surely, Annette," said Emily, starting, "I heard a noise : listen." After a long pause, "No, Ma'amfelle," said Annette, "it was only the wind in the gallery ; I often hear it, when it shakes the old doors, at the other end. But won't you go to bed, ma'amfelle ? you surely will not sit up starving, all night." Emily now laid herself down on the mattress, and desired Annette to leave the lamp burning on the hearth : having done which, the latter placed herself beside Emily, who, however, was not suffered to sleep, for she again thought she heard a noise from the passage ; and Annette was again trying to convince her, that it was only the wind, when footsteps were distinctly heard near the door. Annette was now starting from the bed, but Emily prevailed with her to remain there, and listened with her in a state of terrible expectation. The steps still loitered at the door, when presently an attempt was made on the lock, and, in the next instant, a voice called. "For heaven's sake, Annette, do not answer," said Emily softly, "remain quite still ; but I fear we must extinguish the lamp, or its glare will betray us," "Ho-

ly Virgin!" exclaimed Annette, forgetting her discretion, "I would not be in darkness now for the whole world." While she spoke, the voice became louder than before, and repeated Annette's name; "Blessed Virgin!" cried she suddenly, "it is only Ludovico." She rose to open the door, but Emily prevented her, till they should be more certain, that it was he alone; with whom Annette, at length, talked for sometime, and learned, that he was come to inquire after herself, whom he had let out of her room to go to Emily, and that he was now returned to lock her in again. Emily, fearful of being overheard, if they conversed any longer through the door, consented that it should be opened, and a young man appeared, whose open countenance confirmed the favourable opinion of him, which his care of Annette had already prompted her to form. She intreated his protection, should Verezzi make this requisite; and Ludovico offered to pass the night in an old chamber, adjoining, that opened from the gallery, and, on the first alarm, to come to their defence.

Emily was much soothed by this proposal; and Ludovico, having lighted his lamp, went to his station, while she, once more, endeavoured to repose on her mattress. But a variety of interests pressed upon her attention, and prevented sleep. She thought much on what Annette had told her of the dissolute manners of Montoni and his associates, and more of his present conduct towards herself, and of the danger, from which she had just escaped. From the view of her present situation she shrunk, as from a new picture of terror. She saw herself in a castle, inhabited by vice and violence, seated beyond the reach of law, or justice, and in the power of a man, whose perseverance was equal to every occasion, and in whom passions, of which revenge was not the weakest, entirely supplied the place of principles. She was compelled, once more, to acknowledge, that it would be folly, and not fortitude, any longer to dare his power; and, resigning all hopes of future happiness with Valancourt, she determined, that, on the following morning, she would compromise with Montoni, and give up her estates, on condition, that he would permit her immediate return to France. Such considerations kept her waking for many hours; but, the night passed without further alarm from Verezzi.

On the next morning, Emily had a long conversation with Ludovico, in which she heard circumstances concerning the castle, and received hints of the designs of Montoni, that considerably increased her alarms. On expressing her surprise, that Ludovico, who seemed to be so sensible of the evils of his situation, should continue in it, he informed her, that it was not his intention to do

fo, and she then ventured to ask him, if he would assist her to escape from the castle. Ludovico assured her of his readiness to attempt this, but strongly represented the difficulty of the enterprise, and the certain destruction which must ensue, should Montoni overtake them, before they had passed the mountains; he, however, promised to be watchful of every circumstance, that might contribute to the success of the attempt, and to think upon some plan of departure.

Emily now confided to him the name of Valancourt, and begged he would inquire for such a person among the prisoners in the castle; for the faint hope, which this conversation awakened, made her now recede from her resolution of an immediate compromise with Montoni. She determined, if possible, to delay this, till she heard further from Ludovico, and, if his designs were found to be impracticable, to resign the estates at once.—Her thoughts were on this subject, when Montoni, was now recovered from the intoxication of the preceding night, sent for her, and she immediately obeyed the summons. He was alone. “I find,” said he, “that you were not in your chamber, last night; where were you?” Emily related to him some circumstances of her alarm, and entreated his protection from a repetition of them. “You know the terms of my protection,” said he; “if you really value this, you will secure it.” His open declaration, that he would only conditionally protect her, while she remained a prisoner in the castle, shewed Emily the necessity of an immediate compliance with his terms; but she first demanded, whether he would permit her immediately to depart, if she gave up her claim to the contested estates. In a very solemn manner he then assured her, that he would, and immediately laid before her a paper, which was to transfer the right of those estates to himself.

She was, for a considerable time, unable to sign it, and her heart was torn with contending interests, for she was about to resign the happiness of all her future years—the hope, which had sustained her in so many hours of adversity.

After hearing from Montoni a recapitulation of the conditions of her compliance, and a remonstrance, that his time was valuable, she put her hand to the paper; when she had done which, she fell back in her chair, but soon recovered, and desired, that he would give orders for her departure, and that he would allow Annette to accompany her. Montoni smiled. “It was necessary to deceive you,” said he—“there was no other way of making you act reasonably; you shall go, but it must not be at present. I must first secure these estates by possession: when that is done, you may return to France if you will.”

The deliberate villainy, with which he violated the solemn engagement he had just entered into, shocked Emily as much, as the certainty, that she had made a fruitless sacrifice, and must still remain his prisoner. She had no words to express what she felt, and knew, that it would have been useless, if she had. As she looked piteously at Montoni, he turned away, and at the same time desired she would withdraw to her apartment; but, unable to leave the room, she sat down in a chair near the door, and sighed heavily. She had neither words nor tears.

"Why will you indulge this childish grief?" said he. "Endeavour to strengthen your mind, to bear patiently what cannot now be avoided; you have no real evil to lament; be patient, and you will be sent back to France. At present retire to your apartment."

"I dare not go, sir," said she, "where I shall be liable to the intrusion of Signor Verezzi." "Have I not promised to protect you?" said Montoni. "You have promised sir,"—replied Emily, after some hesitation. "And is not my promise sufficient?" added he sternly. "You will recollect your former promise, Signor," said Emily, trembling, "and may determine for me, whether I ought to rely upon this." "Will you provoke me to declare to you, that I will not protect you then?" said Montoni, in a tone of haughty displeasure. "If that will satisfy you, I will do it immediately. Withdraw to your chamber, before I retract my promise: you have nothing to fear there." Emily left the room, and moved slowly into the hall, where the fear of meeting Verezzi, or Bertolini, made her quicken her steps, though she could scarcely support herself; and soon after she reached once more her own apartment.——Having looked fearfully round her, to examine if any person was there, and having searched every part of it, she fastened the door, and sat down by one of the casements. Here, while she looked out for some hope to support her fainting spirits, which had been so long harassed and oppressed, that, if she had not now struggled much against misfortune, they would have left her, perhaps, for ever, she endeavoured to believe, that Montoni did really intend to permit her return to France as soon as he had secured her property, and that he would, in the meantime, protect her from insult; but her chief hope rested with Lodovico, who, she doubted not, would be zealous in her cause, though he seemed almost to despair of success in it. One circumstance, however, she had to rejoice in. Her prudence, or rather her fears, had saved her from mentioning the name of Valancourt to

Montoni, which she was several times on the point of doing, before she signed the paper, and of stipulating for his release, if he should be really a prisoner in the castle. Had she done this, Montoni's jealous fears would now probably have loaded Valancourt with new severities, and have suggested the advantage of holding him a captive for life.

Thus passed the melancholy day, as she had before passed many in the same chamber. When night drew on, she would have withdrawn herself to Annette's bed, had not a particular interest inclined her to remain in this chamber, in spite of her fears; for, when the castle should be still, and the customary hour arrived, she determined to watch for the music, which she had formerly heard. Though its sounds might not enable her positively to determine, whether Valancourt was there, they would perhaps strengthen her opinion that he was, and impart the comfort, so necessary to her present support.—But, on the other hand, if all should be silent!—She hardly dared to suffer her thoughts to glance that way, but waited, with impatient expectation the approaching hour.

The night was stormy; the battlements of the castle appeared to rock in the wind, and, at intervals, long groans seemed to pass on the air, such as those, which often deceive the melancholy mind, in tempests, and amidst scenes of desolation. Emily heard as formerly, the sentinels pass along the terrace to their posts, and, looking out from her casement, observed, that the watch was doubled; a precaution, which appeared necessary enough, when she threw her eyes on the walls, and saw their shattered condition. The well known sounds of the soldiers' march, and of their distant voices, which passed her in the wind, and were lost again, recalled to her memory the melancholy sensations she had suffered, when she formerly heard the same sounds and occasioned almost involuntary comparisons between her present, and her late situation. But this was no subject for congratulation, and she wisely checked the course of her thoughts, while, as the hour was not yet come, in which she had been accustomed to hear the music, she closed the casement, and endeavoured to await it in patience. The door of the staircase she tried to secure, as usual, with some of the furniture of the room; but this expedient her fears now represented to her to be very inadequate to the power and perseverance of Verezzi; and she often looked at a large and heavy chest, that stood in the chamber, with wishes that she and Annette had strength enough to move it. While she blamed the long stay of this girl, who was

still with Ludovico and some other of the servants, she trimmed her wood fire, to make the room appear less desolate, and sat down beside it with a book, which her eyes perused, while her thoughts wandered to Valancourt, and her own misfortunes. As she sat thus, she thought, in a pause of the wind, she distinguished music, and went to the casement to listen, but the loud swell of the gulf overcame every other sound. When the wind sunk again, she heard distinctly, in the deep pause that succeeded, the sweet strings of a lute ; but again the rising tempest bore away the notes, and again was succeeded by a solemn pause. Emily, trembling with hope and fear, opened her casement to listen, and to try whether her own voice could be heard by the musician ; for to endure any longer this state of torturing suspense concerning Valancourt, seemed to be utterly impossible. There was a kind of breathless stillness in the chambers, that permitted her to distinguish from below the tender notes of the very lute she had formerly heard, and with it, a plaintive voice, made sweeter by the low rustling sound, that now began to creep along the wood tops, till it was lost in the rising wind. Their tall heads then began to wave, while, through a forest of pine, on the left, the wind, groaning heavily, rolled onward over the woods below, bending them almost to their roots ; and, as the long resounding gale swept away, other woods, on the right, seemed to answer the "loud lament ;" then, others, further still, softened it into a murmur, that died into silence. Emily listened, with mingled awe and expectation, hope and fear ; and again the melting sweetness of the lute was heard, and the same solemn breathing voice. Convinced that these came from an apartment underneath, she leaned far out of her window, that she might discover whether any light was there ; but the casements below, as well as those above, were sunk so deep in the thick walls of the castle, that she could not see them, or even the faint ray, that probably glimmered through their bars. She then ventured to call, but the wind bore her voice to the other end of the terrace, and then the music was heard as before, in the pause of the gulf. Suddenly, she thought she heard a noise in her chamber, and she drew herself within the casement ; but, in a moment after, distinguishing Annette's voice at the door, she concluded it was her she had heard before, and she let her in. "Move softly, Annette, to the casement," said she, "and listen with me ; the music is returned." They were silent till, the measure changing, Annette exclaimed, "Holy Virgin ! I know that song well ; it is a French song, one of the favourite songs of my dear country."

This was the ballad Emily had heard on a former night, though not the one she had first listened to from the fishing house in Gascony. "O! it is a Frenchman, that sings," said Annette: "It must be Monsieur Valancourt." "Hark! Annette, do not speak so loud," said Emily, "we may be overheard." "What! by the Chevalier?" said Annette. No," replied Emily mournfully, "but by some body, who may report us to the Signor. What reason have you to think it is Monsieur Valancourt, who sings? But hark! now the voice swells louder! Do you recollect those tones? I fear to trust my own judgment." "I never happened to hear the Chevalier sing, Mademoiselle," replied Annette, who, as Emily was disappointed to perceive, had no stronger reason for concluding this to be Valancourt, than that the musician must be a Frenchman. Soon after, she heard the song of the fishing house, and distinguished her own name, which was repeated so distinctly, that Annette had heard it also. She trembled, sunk into a chair by the window, and Annette called aloud, "Monsieur Valancourt! Monsieur Valancourt!" while Emily endeavoured to check her, but she repeated the call more loudly than before, and the lute, and the voice suddenly stopped. Emily listened, for sometime, in a state of intolerable suspense; but, no answer being returned, "It does not signify, mademoiselle," said Annette; "it is the Chevalier, and I will speak to him." "No, Annette," said Emily, "I think I will speak myself; if it is he, he will know my voice, and speak again." "Who is it," said she, "that sings at this late hour?"

A long silence ensued, and having repeated the question, she perceived some faint accents, mingling in the blast, that swept by; but the sounds were so distant, and passed so suddenly, that she could scarcely hear them, much less distinguish the words they uttered, or recognise the voice. After another pause, Emily called again; and again they heard a voice, but as faintly as before; and they perceived, that there were other circumstances, besides the strength, and direction of the wind, to contend with; for the great depth, at which the casements were fixed in the castle walls, contributed, still more than the distance, to prevent articulated sounds from being understood, though general ones were easily heard. Emily, however, ventured to believe, from the circumstance of her voice alone having been answered, that the stranger was Valancourt, as well as that he knew her, and she gave herself up to speechless joy. Annette however, was not speechless. She renewed her calls, but received no answer; and Emily, fearing, that a further attempt, which certainly was, at present,

highly dangerous, might expose them to the guards of the castle, while it could not perhaps terminate her suspense, insisted on Annette's dropping the inquiry for this night; though she determined herself to question Ludovico, on the subject, in the morning, more urgently than she had yet done. She was now enabled to say, that the stranger, whom she had formerly heard, was still in the castle, and to direct Ludovico, to that part of it, in which he was confined.

Emily, attended by Annette, continued at the casement, for sometime, but all remained still; they heard neither lute or voice again, and Emily was now as much oppressed by anxious joy, as she later, was by a sense of her misfortunes. With hasty steps she paced the room, now ~~stopping~~ calling on Valancourt's name, then suddenly stopping, and now going to the casement and listening, where, however, she heard nothing but the solemn waving of the woods. Sometimes her impatience to speak to Ludovico prompted her to send Annette to call him; but a sense of the impropriety of this at midnight restrained her. Annette meanwhile, as impatient as her mistress, went as often to the casement to listen, and returned almost as much disappointed. She, at length, mentioned Signor Verezzi, and her fear, lest he should enter the chamber by the staircase door. "But the night is now almost past, mademoiselle," said she, recollecting herself, "there is the morning light, beginning to peep over those mountains yonder in the east."

Emily had forgotten till this moment, that such a person existed as Verezzi, and all the danger that had appeared to threaten her; but the mention of his name renewed her alarm, and she remembered the old chest, that she had wished to place against the door, which she now, with Annette, attempted to move, but it was so heavy, that they could not lift it from the floor, "What is in this great old chest, mademoiselle," said Annette, "that makes it so weighty?" Emily having replied, "that she found it in the chamber, when she first came to the castle, and had never examined it,"—"Then I will, ma'amfelle," said Annette, and she tried to lift the lid; but this was held by a lock, for which she had no key, and which, indeed, appeared, from its peculiar construction, to open with a spring. The morning now glimmered through the casements, and the wind had sunk into a calm. Emily looked out upon the dusky woods, and on the twilight mountains, just stealing on the eye, and saw the whole scene, after the storm, lying in profound stillness, the woods motionless; and the clouds above, through which the dawn trem-

bled scarcely appearing to move along the heavens. One soldier was pacing the terrace beneath, with measured steps ; and two, more distant, were sunk asleep on the walls, wearied with the night's watch. Having inhaled, for a while, the pure spirit of the air, and of vegetation, which the late rains had called forth, and having listened, once more, for a note of music, she now closed the casement, and retired to rest.



END OF VOL. II.
